THE BIVOCATIONAL BLUEPRINT: THE NECESSITY FOR MULTIPLE STREAMS OF INCOME

Lorenzo Bennett

B.S., Southern University, 2001
B.A., Louisiana State University, 2017
MMin., Anderson University, 2022

Mentors

William Curtis, DMin
Lance Watson Sr., DMin

A FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Dayton, Ohio
May 2026

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ABSTRACT

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by
Lorenzo Bennett
United Theological Seminary, 2025

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William Curtis, DMin
Lance Watson Sr., DMin

This project addresses the financial challenges pastors often face as they navigate ministry amid overreliance on the church, the rising cost of living, and ecclesiastical disputes. This problem was discovered while serving at the Strangers Home Baptist Church. The hypothesis statement is if pastors attend a workshop that focuses on bivocationlism, financial planning, and conflict resolution then they will discover tools to combat economically troubled times, charter difficult seasons, and balance ministry and marketplace, among others. A qualitative analysis of pre- and post-surveys, journals and individual interviews indicate participants were able to identify the benefits and necessity of bivocationalism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I want to thank my Heavenly Father, Jehovah, for promising me in the Summer of 2003 that "He had something in store for me." I embrace this monumental achievement as part of that promise. I want to thank my wife, Lady Carrie L. Bennett, for putting up with me during my educational journey. Thank you for praying, supporting, and being a super mom during my travels. I thank my beautiful daughters, Gabrielle and London, for sharing me with the books. I pray this moment stands as a reminder that "You Can!" I honor my faith communities, past and present, specifically Triumph Kingdom Builders and Strangers Home Baptist Churches. I pay homage to my mentors in ministry, my pastor and grandfather, Rev. Leroy Sanders Sr., and my uncle, Rev. Dale J. Sanders Sr. I am forever indebted to you both for the invaluable wisdom through the years.

To my mother, Janice S. Bennett, thank you for life. To my late father, Clarence G. Bennett Sr., I wish you could witness this moment. Thank you both for what you were able to give me. I would not be without you. I am because you are and were. To my doctoral mentors, Dr. Lance D. Watson and Dr. William H. Curtis, I am honored to have sat at your feet for three years. Your scholarly insights, assistance, contributions, and examples have shaped the future of my ministry. To my editor, Dr. Sherri Jackson, thank you for your guidance, prayers, coaching, and patience.

Finally, I want to thank my entire family, the Bennetts, Sanders, and Whites. I am a composite of all of you. I especially want to mention my uncle, Leroy Sanders Jr., my brothers, Clarence and Antoine, and my sister, Dr. Audria B. King. MUCH OBLIGED!

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to every Pastor and ministry leader who may be considering bivocationalism and even those who may not have considered it. I pray that my labors are the catalyst for change and the blueprint for your tomorrow.

ABBREVIATIONS

NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
SHBC	Strangers Home Baptist Church

And, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers.

—Acts 18:3

INTRODUCTION

The economic and ecclesiastical landscapes are changing before us. While the cost of living is increasing, church attendance is decreasing. It is becoming increasingly harder for pastors to undergird their livelihood on one income. The remedy is to implement a bivocational ministry structure. This has led me to a financial bootcamp for pastors and church leaders to enlightened them on bivocationalism and the necessity for multiple streams of income.

Chapter One, Ministry Focus, centers on my own experiences in ministry. My earlier years of ministry were spent under the tutelage of my pastor who is also my grandfather. His experiences in ministry shaped my view of ministry. Witnessing my pastor experience a financial crisis, harsh treatment, unwarranted scrutiny, and economic hardship, I would always resolve to be a bi-vocational pastor if I were to become a pastor. I trust God but dare not place the same trust in His people. I am currently the pastor of the Strangers Home Baptist Church in Slaughter, Louisiana. The fellowship is in the rural context with a congregation size of less than 100. Strangers Home does not have the capacity to support my livelihood in entirety. Though Strangers Home is a loving, healthy and god-fearing fellowship, this congregation cannot financially undergird a pastor's livelihood. These two factors were the catalyst for The Bivocational Blueprint, which is a financial workshop for pastors and church leaders. The goal of this project is to enlightened pastors and church leaders on the necessity of multiple streams of income.

Chapter Two, Biblical Foundations, analyzes Paul's statement in Acts 20:34 where he shares how he met his needs and the needs of his companions, who traveled with him. When this text and surrounding scriptures are examined, the message is conveyed that Paul does not want to be a burden to the church nor an "eye sore" to the Gospel. He is aware that although he has a positional right to place his needs on the church, his example is of a willingness to work is needed. For clergy of color, financial security is the primary reason that many are involved in bivocational ministry. Yet, Paul's statements in Acts 20 model bivocational ministry and self-sufficiency indicating Christian leaders may have to seek employment beyond the church to care for themselves and their families.

Chapter Three, Historical Foundations, provides a historical analysis of Moravian missionary, Johann Leonard Dober. He and his co-laborer were the first two missionaries to journey to the West Indies. Dober utilized his pottery skills to meet his needs and the needs of his ministry companion during their missionary expedition. The financial challenges that pastors and other spiritual leaders face and finding ways to overcome those challenges are not new. However, as the economy is uncertain, pastors must seek out innovative solutions to overcome those challenges. Johann Leonard Dober's life and ministerial experiences provide a model of bivocationalism and provides for the church and clergy a path forward to meet those challenges while continuing the work of ministry.

Chapter Four, Theological Foundations, explores Practical Theology, which is the merging and implementing of theology in the realistic setting. Practical Theology is taking the scriptures and putting those principles to work. This discipline gives

theological direction for encounters with individuals, communities, and society. It provides wisdom for clergy to fulfill our divine calling in changing times. Practical Theology speaks to bivocational ministry, shaping and guiding ministry practices. This theological discourse challenges ministers to actively seek out innovative solutions to meet not only their needs but the needs of their congregations and communities.

Chapter Five, Interdisciplinary Foundations, targets Industrial Relations through Adaptive Leadership Theory to explore the connections and relationship between the employer and employee in the workplace. The Adaptive Leadership Theory hinges on the idea that one considers the circumstances and adjust to grow evolve or achieve success. Through the ability to adapt, biblical principles can be applied, and ministries can be shaped. The Adaptive Leadership Theory provides for the church a practical way to navigate financial challenges with creativity and resilience. Thus. The church is not only strengthened but leaders and congregants are empowered to not only survive but thrive in an ever-changing economy.

Chapter Six presents the Project Analysis, which interpreted data captured during the financial workshop for pastors and ministry leaders. The chapter includes the following: 1) the methodology, which shows how data was collected; 2) means of Implementation, which provides the framework of the project, details of participants, and expertise of panelists; 3) Summary of Learning, which shares how the project supported the hypothesis; and 4) the Conclusion, which points backs to bivocationalism being a viable remedy.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

I have served Strangers Home Baptist Church, a small, family-oriented community of faith, since March 2020. For 117 years, this congregation has met in Slaughter, Louisiana, a rural town less than twenty miles from Baton Rouge.[1] My tenure followed the pastor, who died after twenty-four years of service to this small congregation. The members appeared filled with despair and defeat during my first visit to this fellowship. Many had stopped attending. Upon accepting the assignment to pastor this congregation, I reflected on the church's needs and my life's journey. I immediately realized that I was prepared for this assignment and called to the people of Strangers Home Baptist Church. God, along with His chosen vessels, gifted me with ministerial skills and interests that perfectly align with the needs of Strangers Home. Sometimes, God employs a peculiar approach to accomplish His will. In addition to preparing me for this ministry context, God decided to use my secular ventures as training grounds for leading His people. Throughout this Synergy Paper, I aim to show how God prepared me to shepherd His people and how God readied His people to be shepherded by me.

[1] "Distance from Baton Rouge, LA to Slaughter, LA," https://www.distance-cities.com/distance-baton-rouge-la-to-slaughter-la.

Context

Reverend J. Smith founded Strangers Home in 1906. The inaugural officers included "Bro. Willie Hamilton, Bro. W. Wilson, Bro. Jay Gayden, Bro. Rest Scott, and Sis. Nora Gayden, the Church Mother."[2] Interestingly, many of these surnames remain within the congregation. Strangers Home is a family-oriented church mainly composed of five to seven families. The church's location is 8525 Lemon Road, which was racially divided. This road once had a racial divide. Blacks lived on one end, and Whites lived on the other end. Notably, it is on what is deemed the "white side" of the road—an intriguing fact given the racial climate of the time. Despite some instances of vandalism, the damage remained minimal.

In 1930, the congregation chose Rev. Simon Jackson as the pastor. His tenure marked significant progress for the church. Longtime church member Jessie Hamilton tells the following story that marks a substantial change in the lives of the church and the community:

> In 1947, a teacher physically punishes me at a nearby public school on the first day of school. This incident quenched my excitement and eagerness to learn and led me to drop out of that school. However, Walter Chaney, a white business owner, and Benny Hayes, a member of Strangers Home Baptist Church, worked together to establish a school at the church. I was a student in the inaugural class. At that time, the school held classes for students in the first through sixth grades. Church members and Blacks throughout the community enrolled in the school, where Lilly Hampton taught all grades. With no kitchen, extra facilities, or running water, students were required to bring their own lunch. Since there was no kitchen, the students were required to bring their own lunch. There was an outhouse on the church's grounds.[3]

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[2] "Church History," https://strangershomebc.com/church-history.

[3]Jessie Hamilton, interviewed by Lorenzo Bennett, Strangers Home Baptist Church, Slaughter, LA, February 19, 2023.

It is unknown how long the school operated. However, the school, during its operation significantly contributed to the community.

Pastor Simon Jackson's tenure lasted until 1958. In the same year, the church welcomed the leadership of Rev. Willie Williams. A significant event during his leadership was the construction of a new edifice, the second building of Strangers Home. "House Parties," commonly known as church suppers, provided funds to accomplish this monumental task. "Church members would prepare food and sell dinner plates at home to supplement the church's building funds. Pastries such as tea cakes and cakes were also sold along with dinner plates. Regardless of the amount, the congregation pooled all proceeds in the church's building funds. Given the modest salaries of the members, these supplementary efforts were necessary,"[4] In 1976, there was a change in leadership as Reverend Odell Tickles became pastor. However, a tragic event occurred under his leadership. "Bro. James Harris Sr., who was the chairman of deacons, was struck by a falling tree branch when he was cutting down a tree on the church grounds. He was later found dead near the tree by church members,"[5] states church member Kenneth Tate said. Deacon Harris' legacy remains as his daughter is an active church member. Ironically, Tate is Deacon Harris' grandson, who now serves as the chairman of deacons.

Following Reverend Tickles' resignation in 1986, the church was without a pastor for two years. However, in 1988, the congregation elected Reverend Norwood Booker as

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[4] Bernice Hayes, interviewed by Lorenzo Bennett, Strangers Home Baptist Church, Slaughter, LA, February 19, 2023.

[5] Kenneth Tate, interviewed by Lorenzo Bennett, Strangers Home Baptist Church, Slaughter, LA, February 19, 2023.

the leader. Reverend Johnny A. Johnson succeeded him. The exact duration of their respective tenures is unclear, but Reverend Johnson remained pastor until 1994. The subsequent pastoral search lasted roughly a year, during which guest preachers conducted Sunday services. A turning point came in 1995 when the congregation chose Rev. Dr. Thomas Lewis Jr. to lead the Lord's people. His leadership saw several accomplishments, including establishing a youth ministry and initiating Youth Sunday on the first Sunday of each month.[6] This development provided a formal structure and avenue for the youth to express themselves uniquely. The congregation constructed the current sanctuary in 2003. At this time, the congregation had become better educated, which led to improved jobs and salaries. Consequently, the congregation's giving increased, eliminating the need for "House parties." The building project was funded solely by tithes and offerings. Pastor Lewis led the congregation for twenty four years, serving until death.

Following this painful loss, the pastoral search committee began searching for a new leader under Kenneth Tate's guidance. During this time, worship services continued, and the congregation pressed on with an unexplained sense of urgency. On February 24, 2020, the congregation elected me to lead the people of Strangers Home Baptist Church. By mid-March 2020, the sense of urgency became apparent as the world grappled with the Coronavirus global pandemic, which disrupted everyday life. Amid this turmoil, the Lord faithfully ensured Strangers Home had guidance. With God's guidance, I began to lead and sustain the Strangers Home congregation by offering "Christ with Coffee" devotions every Sunday on Facebook and Bible studies every Wednesday night via Zoom. We also added a drive-up parking lot option, allowing members to safely listen to

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[6] Church History, https://strangershomebc.com/church-history.

the service via a loudspeaker from the comfort of their vehicles. On Sunday, March 21, 2021, I was officially installed as the pastor of Strangers Home Baptist Church while also celebrating my first anniversary.

Upon resuming in-person worship, I had the opportunity to assess the congregation closely. One of the early observations was that many of the methods in place were antiquated. For example, those in charge of finances used a spiral notebook to record finance transactions and financial donations. The finance committee calculated financial statements manually. They used the entire worship service to count and record the offerings. Moreover, the church did not own any computers. To say this posed a problem would be an understatement.

The worship schedule and worship experience at Strangers Home were often undesirable. Worship services were on the month's first, second, and fourth Sundays. On the first and second Sundays, no organist left the congregation to sing hymns and chants without music. Before my tenure, there was no sermon on the first Sunday. An organist was present only on the fourth Sunday. Furthermore, the second Sunday was devoted to testimony or "speak meeting service," when the congregation would stand and testify about their faith and relationship with God. This format did not appear to be conducive to growth.

According to my understanding of biblical and cultural standards, the worship experience should include preaching, praying, and praise. According to the prophet Isaiah, in worship, we are to "Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of *good news*; lift it up, fear not; say to

the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!'"[7] Currently, prayer and praise should always accompany the preached Word. I believe musical instruments are a vital component of praise, and their absence could render the worship experience incomplete. Alongside prayer, music helps to prepare the people's hearts for the sermon. Unfortunately, Strangers Home lacked in this area.

Apart from Bible study on Wednesdays, the church meets only three Sundays a month. This structure has been in place since the church's inception. When asked about the worship schedule, the unanimous response was that the previous pastors led other churches besides Strangers Home. Those off Sundays allowed pastors to fulfill their other pastoral obligations. Pastors often served several churches because one church could not financially support the pastor. Strangers Home remains unable to support the pastor financially.

When I arrived at the church, I discovered a deficiency in biblical understanding. Often, I mistakenly assume that longtime Christians have a certain level of biblical comprehension. Many members of Strangers Home were open about their limited biblical knowledge. While there was a desire to learn God's truths, there was no guiding voice in their midst. Referring to God's people, I fully believe the prophet Hosea's words, "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge."[8] As Strangers Home's appointed man of God, I was solely responsible for imparting God's Word to His people.

The absence of solid bonding relationships can pose challenges when a church faces problems, and Strangers Home is no exception. Upon my arrival, I discovered that

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[7] Isaiah 40:9, NRSV, unless noted otherwise, all bible citations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

[8] Hosea 4:6.

the church had no affiliations. There was no connection with any local, regional, or national convention or conference. This lack of association partly explains why the pastoral search was laborious. There was no entity to intervene and aid in a time of need. The chairman of deacons spearheaded the pastoral search alone. He had no prior experience with the task. He had zeal with limited knowledge. Although his weariness was not visible, it was later evident that he was exhausted when I arrived. External support could have avoided many of these hardships.

I noticed a potential challenge as I examined the community and church demographics. While Strangers Home welcomes all, its congregation is entirely Black. According to the 2020 U.S. Census data, Slaughter is a predominantly white community, with 90.19 percent of its 1,047 residents being white.[9] According to the U.S. Census 2020, African Americans comprise 8.84 percent of the population, a percentage significantly lower than that of the East Baton Rouge Parish, where African Americans comprise 47.4 percent.[10] Strangers Home has eighty-five members, approximately matching the total number of African Americans in Slaughter.

Interestingly, very few members live in Slaughter. Although many members originate from the town, they live in neighboring areas. Based on my observations, the church is aging, with fewer children in the ranks. Most youth in the fellowship are in middle or high school, while most college-age members are away attending college. These dynamics forced me to consider the future of the fellowship seriously. From my perspective,

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[9] World Population Review, "Slaughter, Louisiana Population 2023," https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/slaughter-la-population.

[10] "Slaughter, Louisiana," https://datausa.io/profile/geo/slaughter-la.

the future growth and membership of Strangers Home may not be within the town of Slaughter.

Ministry Journey

In Louisiana, gumbo is one of our signature entrees. This Creole cuisine is a roux base with key ingredients, including okra, sausage, crabs, shrimp, and onions. After combining the ingredients and simmering them for a couple of hours, the result is an almost unbelievable culinary creation. Gumbo is a metaphor that resonates with my ministry journey. God has allowed a plethora of parts to make me who I am. God has permitted a dash of this and a cup of that to influence my life, labor, testimony, and, ultimately, ministry. I echo the words of the Apostle Paul, "But by the grace of God I am what I am…"[11]

I have always had a keen interest in animals since childhood. I vividly remember the first time I spelled the word "animal" and recall my childhood pets with fondness. As their caregiver, I took it upon myself to ensure their health and well-being. To do so, I had to research and understand pet health because I wanted to be a responsible steward of the creatures under my care. Thus, it was a given that I would major in animal science in college. Initially, it might have seemed inappropriate for someone called into ministry. However, as I continued my journey, it made perfect sense.

The most renowned king of Israel, King David, was initially a shepherd who cared for his father's sheep. To a twenty-first-century observer, this was not mere happenstance but divine providence. God had David tend to the welfare of his earthly

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[11] 1 Corinthians 15:10.

father's sheep as a precursor to his role as a shepherd to his heavenly father's sheep. David's preparation period mirrored my own. God has used my years of caring for animals as part of my divine training as His under shepherd. I had to study animal health diligently to ensure I fed them better diets. In pastoring, it is much the same. I must diligently study to feed the Lord's sheep with knowledge and understanding. The idea of gospel ministry was not even on my horizon during college. I obtained my Bachelor of Science in Animal Science and eventually secured a position at the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine. By this time, I had answered my call to ministry.

Surprisingly, the season was one of molding. God used my circumstances to shape me. My pastor, along with my preaching brothers, began to mentor me. It was a revelation that ministry was so encompassing—my pastor, a stickler for study, led by example. Whenever I visited him, his study materials were always open. It then became imperative to immerse myself in study and Bible knowledge. I would seclude myself in my bedroom for days as I deeply engaged in study. I was eager to understand God's Word and hold it in my mind and heart. I can still hear my pastor quoting from the King James Version, Apostle Paul, stating, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."[12] My pastor was apt to teach. His ability to exegete a text without hesitation challenged me to learn how to connect the dots in scripture.

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[12] 2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

Theologian and musicologist Albert Schweitzer once said, “A good example has twice the value of good advice.”[13] This wisdom applied well to my pastor. He was a living example to his family and congregation. I watched him carry out his pastoral duties, using those moments as teachable opportunities. He frequently shared common pastoral challenges and suitable solutions. He taught me the fundamentals of ministry and pulpit etiquette. He also stressed that preachers should study and make corrections when in error. While this might not seem significant to others, it is priceless. The atmosphere was conducive to molding a young preacher into a wise pastor. I gained insights into interacting with various groups and church ministries, such as deacons, mothers, ushers, and choirs.

According to Apostle Paul’s letter to Timothy, Paul refers to Timothy as “my true son in the faith.”[14] I often compare my relationship with that of Paul and Timothy. Despite no biological tie, Paul and Timothy had a deep spiritual connection. Timothy had received Christ through Paul’s ministry, making him Paul’s protégé. The apostle poured his knowledge and wisdom into the young man, leaving no aspect of faith unexplored. Paul shared everything from church discipline to sound doctrine. Paul encouraged Timothy by referencing his hereditary templates and instructed him to be an example, regardless of his youth. This biblical example has inspired me.

My pastor and I share spiritual and biological connections, as he is also my grandfather. He began pouring his wisdom into me long before I accepted my call into ministry. As his congregant and grandchild, I remember him sharing the scriptures with

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[13] Kate Gemma, “Albert Schweitzer Quotes on Living A Happy, Kind & Ethical Life,” https://thegoalchaser.com/albert-schweitzer-quotes/.

[14] 1 Timothy 1:2.

my older brother and me when we were young. I vividly recall my grandfather and a deacon baptizing me at five years old. I discovered another sphere of didactic instruction when I accepted my call to the preaching ministry. I received constant and consistent lessons under his direct tutelage for more than 17 years. When the Lord elevated me into the pastoral ministry, I experienced yet another shift. The Holy Spirit reminded me of my pastor's teachings while I stood in service. Lessons from 10 and 15 years ago resurfaced as if I had just learned them.

Whenever I call or visit my grandfather, he offers instruction, encouragement, and edification. Words like "You have to teach them," "I am proud of you," and "Keep doing what you're doing" resonate with me. In his way, my Paul tells me to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. As I grew in ministry, I progressed in my secular professional development. Launching a pet cremation service and leaving my position at the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine were no small feats. The groundwork was strenuous, involving numerous calls and emails to equipment manufacturers and material suppliers. Once this preliminary work was complete, the focus shifted to advertising and acquiring clients.

One year into business, I traveled to a well-established crematory in Hawaii to gain first-hand experience. I observed various logistical techniques, cremation methods, and growth strategies in my four shadowing days. I took a deep dive into the intricacies of the business, as well as growth strategies and logistical issues. Growth was gradual, and I'm constantly reminded of the prophet's words, "Do not despise these small beginnings…"[15] Over time, a pet cremation service catering to one veterinary clinic in

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[15] Zechariah 4:10.

2013 expanded to fifty-three clinics, sixteen pet stores, and a second location. God showed me during this season that great things do not happen overnight. I learned that wonders manifest with God's guidance and my willingness to work hard.

English novelist Catherine Aird said, "If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to serve as a horrible warning."[16] Unfortunately, my pastor was both. My grandfather accepted his call to ministry when he was twenty four and rapidly became a pastor for two churches: one in uptown New Orleans and the other in the suburbs. He preferred the suburban church, as he eventually resigned from the Uptown church. When he went to this suburban church in 1971, the church did not have a bank account or money. It did have a broken organ. The church did not even have a back door. The pastor's starting salary was only sixty-five dollars a month. Despite the formidable challenges, my grandfather believed in the church. He held the conviction that God had called him to that place and those people. Although it was a small community church, he took his responsibilities seriously.

At the outset, my grandfather was a bi-vocational pastor, with painting as his primary source of income. He was an excellent painter and never shied away from hard work. He purchased a work van and put his phone number on the side, painting homes in high-end neighborhoods. His roles were manifold as he was a preacher, teacher, pastor, and painter. His gift of teaching the Word allowed the church to grow spiritually, numerically, and financially. As the pews began to fill, so did his agenda. He started preaching locally and nationally. Often, to support him, his family and the church and

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[16] Power Quotes, Catherine Aird, https://www.powerquotations.com/quote/if-you-cant-be-a.

family accompanied him to both local and regional services. At times, we attended as many as five services in one day.

As the years passed, I went away to college. After graduation, I returned to the Greater New Orleans area and, importantly, to my roots — the church. I began to fellowship with my home church again. That small community church had grown significantly, spanning two cities with more than 600 members. I reinstated my membership at the second location. Two years later, I accepted my call into ministry. As time progressed, my pastor's stern voice and vigor were waning. A disgruntled member began sowing discord within the fellowship, indicating that just as one bad apple can spoil the bunch, one unhappy member can damage a lot of good. Internal strife now filled the loving church that had been my spiritual home. The vineyard, which my pastor and grandfather had nurtured for nearly 41 years, was falling apart, and the membership was dwindling.

Unfounded accusations of theft and mounting legal fees hung over my grandfather's head. He fought and prayed to protect the church and his reputation, but both suffered as war casualties. Eventually, he resigned, leaving with only 100 members to start a new church. The reputation of the church was not the only casualty. This event tarnished my grandfather's reputation and eroded his financial stability. The church he had devoted his life to, the people he had married and buried, the people for which he visited and prayed, the people he had set his paintbrush aside to take up the Bible, stood by and allowed deceit to grow and propagate. Witnessing my pastor experience a financial crisis, harsh treatment, unwarranted scrutiny, and economic hardship, I would

always resolve to be a bi-vocational pastor if I were to become a pastor. I trust God but dare not place the same trust in His people.

Synergy

In scripture, God is revealed as the Alpha, Omega, and the Beginning and the End.[17] Often, we may not understand the circumstances and events in our lives. However, I believe that God can see the bigger picture. God prepares us for our ministerial assignment. He knew us before our existence and predetermined our path before we embarked upon it.

Strangers Home Baptist Church had seen better days before my arrival. The congregation was grieving the pastor's death. As Zechariah 13:7 intimates, "When the shepherd is away, the sheep will scatter." Such was the case with Strangers Home. There was a significant falling away from the fellowship. The pandemic only worsened the situation, exacerbating the problems at hand. It fell to me to revitalize a fragmented church.

I am thankful that God had equipped me years earlier for this assignment. He gave me a business that started from an idea. With God's guidance and blessings, I could compete with national and international corporations. How could I manage the handful of five and ten members who returned to church service upon reopening? I did what God had taught me in my secular professional development. I did not despise the small beginning. I preached as if the five were fifty and the ten were one hundred. I prepared each sermon as if I were preparing for a revival.

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[17] Revelation 22:13.

In the early stages, I relied heavily on numerous principles I had learned during my business development. For example, I often asked myself how people would visit us if they did not know we existed. The solution was to launch a social media blast with content that reached far beyond our typical audience. This content targeted residents of our area and neighboring towns. I also contacted a local advertising company and arranged to install billboards displaying our church in two high-traffic areas. God had shown me how to increase awareness, and I aimed to make Strangers Home a household name for His glory.

The thirst for scriptural understanding my pastor instilled in me now came into play. Strangers Home's members desired to be nourished by God's Word. They had an inner longing to know God more deeply. This match is a perfect match and fit. As I studied and delved into the scriptures, I was blessed to have a congregation eager to receive God's Word. Members requested that sermons not crescendo but that the sermon present a solid Word. Preparing Bible study lessons and sermons is always easier when there are listeners who genuinely wish to hear.

Strangers Home is a church deeply rooted in tradition. There was an urgent need to introduce fresh elements in the worship experience. Leadership should make changes strategically and respectfully to maintain the established culture. Thanks to my upbringing, a combination of suburban and rural experiences, and traveling with my uncle to various states where he preached, I had valuable insights to contribute. Before implementing any changes, I reassured my congregation that McDonald's never took the Big Mac off the menu. They added other things around it. I believe this helped the

members understand that I was not seeking to eradicate the Strangers Home they knew but rather to assist the church in evolving.

One of the initial modifications I implemented was hiring an organist for the first and second Sundays of each month. The dynamics of our worship experience shifted instantly, offering a complete worship experience every time we met. The testimony service has always been a cornerstone of our second Sundays, and our membership is not ready to relinquish it. Therefore, I had to find a way to ensure that it did not overshadow the entirety of the service. I decided to assemble a praise team to minister on those Sundays, which served to refocus the service after the testimonies.

One of the most significant and advantageous aspects of my pastorate at Strangers Home is that we only have three Sundays a month. This schedule complements my secular occupation. The demands of entrepreneurship can sometimes be overwhelming, especially with a growing business that operates around the clock. I expect to receive phone calls after midnight on a Saturday night or during and immediately following worship service. Whenever these calls occur, I must provide my pet aftercare services once the worship service concludes. This worship schedule gives me periodic breaks from sermon preparation and other weekly pastoral duties. As I have no associate ministers, these built-in pauses prevent continuous preaching.

The American Psychiatric Association describes posttraumatic stress disorder, commonly called PTSD, as a "psychiatric disorder that may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event, series of events or set of circumstances."[18]

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[18] American Psychiatric Association, "What is Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?" https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/ptsd/what-is-ptsd.

Though the disorder does not discriminate, the severity and longevity of the symptoms vary. I have experienced what is commonly known as "church hurt," and I believe the traumatic events surrounding it lend itself to me having a form of PTSD. While I trust God, I find it challenging to trust His people fully. Being so close to my pastor at this junction in his ministry made me acutely aware of the damaging effects that church feuding had on his mental state, relationships, and finances. This "church hurt" profoundly affected me, forever altering my perception of ministry and the church. I once believed that a pastor should feed the church with scripture, and in return, the church should sustain the pastor's livelihood. However, witnessing such discord up close, I vehemently changed my perspective and realized that, for various reasons, today's pastor should pursue dual vocations.

Considering the rise of the unchurched generation, the hostile scrutiny of the church, and the escalating cost of living, I firmly believe it is in the pastor's best interest to be a bi-vocational pastor. I intend to explore bi-vocational pastors through my Doctor of Ministry project. Many things have changed in the modern church compared to yesteryear. Attendance has decreased, and a significant portion of the congregation belongs to this unchurched generation.[19] These individuals do not believe that the church must financially support the pastor in completeness. Coupled with a decrease in commitment compared to past generations and the negative perception that pastors may misuse funds, the church is under a black cloud of skepticism. Even the pastor's personal belongings, such as vehicles, homes, and other luxuries, are often under scrutiny.

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[19] Jeffrey M. Jones, "U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time," https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx.

Furthermore, we have witnessed an economic crisis in our nation and globally, resulting in a rapid increase in the cost of living. Essential commodities like fuel, food, and insurance have increased in price. This situation and decreasing church attendance could significantly challenge small—to medium-sized churches to meet a pastor's financial needs.

As I consider the Strangers Home Baptist Church as a whole, it is evident that it is a great church. It is a loving, healthy, god-fearing fellowship, but there was one component worth noting: this church could not ungird a pastor's livelihood in totality. Due to the number of members and the financial intake, the pastor must embrace a bi-vocational ministry structure. As I consider the landscape of the current church, society, and economy, I noticed this obstacle is not limited to this context, as the local problem is in many religious contexts beyond mine.

This thesis and my Doctor of Ministry project will serve as a cautionary tale for pastors, shedding light on emerging trends in ministry. Hopefully, this project will illuminate the uncertainties associated with a full-time pastorate and better equip pastors to navigate transition seasons, such as retirement, and conflict, such as church in-fighting.

The tentative strategy for my Doctor of Ministry project involves surveying a group of pastors through various methods, such as social media campaigns, cold calls, church conferences, mailouts, and emails. I will conduct two surveys, one for full-time pastors and the other for bi-vocational pastors. These surveys will address questions related to financial stability and retirement. I will limit the number of questions to respect the participants' time and increase their response rates. Complete anonymity will be ensured through an online survey platform, providing participants with the comfort they

need to answer honestly. My goal is to collect data that supports the claim that pastoring alone lacks security. At the end of this project, I hope to substantiate my convictions with empirical evidence.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The Association of Theological Schools, in a 2017 survey, makes the case that "about 30% of graduating seminarians anticipated bi-vocational ministry (Deasasy 2018)."[1] The survey also reveals that "almost 60% of Black seminarians and over 40% of Hispanic/Latinx seminarians were preparing for bivocational ministry. There is a clear trend that people of color are more likely to be involved in bivocational ministry (Young Brown 2017)."[2] Financial security is the dominant reason for this dynamic among clergy of color. In fact, "65% stated they have more financial security due to bivocational ministry."[3]

Though some may dream of giving their whole selves to congregational ministry without needing external financial sources to maintain their lives, many pastors will not serve congregations that allow them to fulfill that dream. Brown posits, "A large segment of ministers who are bivocational will need to balance ministry demands with other paid

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[1] Jessica Young Brown, "Black and Bivocational," in *Bivocational & Beyond For Thriving Multivocational Ministry,* ed. Darryl W. Stephens (Chicago, IL: Atla Open Press, 2022), 66.

[2] Brown, "Black and Bivocational," 66-67.

[3] Brown, "Black and Bivocational," 69.

employment."[4] The findings regarding bi-vocational pastors in the 2017 Association of Theological Schools reflect the example of the Apostle Paul's financial need to engage in a bi-vocational undertaking in the first century. David M. Gustafson, in an article, "A Church History of Bivo," writes, "Dual-role ministry, or tentmaking, as a means for Christian leaders to finance their mission has been the practice of the Church since its inception. In fact, throughout church history, the full-time, fully funded pastor is the exception and bivocational ministry is the norm."[5]

As a bi-vocational pastor, I firmly believe it is in a pastor's best interest to be bi-vocational. Not only do I serve as a pastor of a small rural congregation in Louisiana, but I also own and operate a business that allows me to provide financial security for my family and maintain a sense of independence. Though I have read about the Apostle Paul's journey as a bivocational minister, I have witnessed my grandfather's experience as a full-time pastor and its financial woes. Thus, my doctoral project seeks to explore the viability and the benefits of bi-vocational ministry, aligning with the principles exemplified by Paul in Acts 20:17-38.

Many things have changed in the twenty-first-century Church compared to the Church in earlier generations. Attendance has decreased, and a significant portion of the congregation belongs to this unchurched generation.[6] Rothfuss argues that most churches grapple with financial issues, with many needing financial support rather than having the

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[4] Brown, "Black and Bivocational," 66.

[5] David M. Gustafson, "A Church History of Bivo: Tentmaking From the Beginning Unto Now," https://www.efcatoday.org/story/church-history-bivo.

[6] Caleb Rothfuss, "Comparing Generation Z and Generation X: The Struggles of Teens Following in the Faith of Their Parents" (master's thesis, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, 2021), 17.

financial means to care for their people. Rothfuss also contends that Generations X and Z do not believe that the Church should support the pastor in completeness financially. Similarly, Daniel Cox argues that "without robust religious experiences to draw on, Americans feel less connected to the traditions and beliefs of their parent's faith."[7] Coupled with a decrease in commitment compared to past generations and the negative perception that pastors may misuse funds, the Church is under a black cloud of skepticism.

Furthermore, the pastor's personal belongings, such as vehicles, homes, and other luxuries, are often under scrutiny. The recent national and international economic downturns have precipitously raised living expenses. Essential commodities like fuel, food, and insurance have increased prices. This situation and a decline in church attendance could pose a significant challenge for small- to medium-sized churches to meet a pastor's financial needs.

Exegesis of Acts 20:17-38

The passage from Acts 20:17-24 illustrates the apostle Paul's farewell address to the church elders in Ephesus. Paul recollects his ministry in Asia and says he had served the Lord humbly through all trials raised by adversaries. He later worked night and day, preaching publicly and privately to Jews and Greeks, urging them to repent and have faith in God and Christ Jesus. In the future, Paul does not have any illusions about what will happen to him in Jerusalem, save only that, through the forewarning of the Holy

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[7] Daniel A. Cox, "Generation Z and the Future of Faith in America," The Survey Center on American Life, March 24, 2022, https://www.americansurveycenter.org/research/generation-z-future-of-faith/.

Spirit, hardships are looking ahead. Meanwhile, though, he was pretty unfazed and not the least bit daunted by the prospect of suffering and adversity, all things which might personally befall him in the process of fulfilling his divine mission to testify to God's grace through the Gospel." And now I know that none of you, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will ever see my face again. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work, we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive."

And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words he spoke, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

Background and Literary Context of Acts

The book of Acts is a vital component of the New Testament. Many believe that Luke, the evangelist, wrote the gospel of Luke. This unique work seamlessly continues the narrative initiated in the Gospel, delving into the formative years and expansion of the emerging Christian Church. Genre-wise, acts are predominantly classified as historical narratives. While rooted in historical events, it does not conform to the modern standards of exhaustive historical documentation. This article suggests Acts is a theological history mixed with historical theology. The book concentrates on the infancy of the Christians, the apostolic work, and the process by which Christianity spread in the first century. Its plot emanates from the main junctions and crucial persons that reveal the role of the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the spread of Christianity.

The purpose of the writing found in Acts is to provide a historically credible account of the early formation and development of the Christian Church. It functions insofar as it exists as the link between the teachings of Jesus Christ narrated in the Gospels and the growth of Christianity after the ascension of Christ. The Book's beam of light in establishing the Church is on the socio-significant incidents such as the descending of the Holy Spirit, the transformation of Saul to Paul, the expansion of Christianity, and others. They emphasize the main points of the apostolate, the key characters who circulated the teachings of Christ and started the communities – Peter and Paul. It interweaves themes like the potent agency of the Holy Spirit, the imperative of unity among believers, the trials confronted by early Christians, and the expansive reach of the Gospel across diverse cultures and regions.

Canonical

Many suggest Luke is the author of Acts, which serves as a historical account of the early believers in Christianity and the circulation of the teachings post-Jesus' ascension. In the first two verses of Acts 1, the writer suggests he is also the author of a previous book, which some believe is the gospel of Luke. Traditionally, "going back firmly to Irenaeus of Lyons, is that the author was an individual by the name of Luke."[8] Irenaeus claims that Luke is the traveling companion to whom Paul often alludes. According to Padillo, Irenaeus further states, "That this Luke was inseparable from Paul, and his fellow-laborer in the Gospel, he makes clear, not boasting, but as bound to do so

[8] Osvaldo Padilla, *The Acts of the Apostles: Interpretation, History and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006), 21.

by the truth itself."[9] Irenaeus sets out to prove his stance by using "a number of passages from what we call today the 'we' sections of the Acts of the Apostles (e.g., Acts 16:10-16; 20:6, etc.)."[10]

Consider why Irenaeus adamantly posits that Luke is indeed the author of Acts:[11]

1. He authored the third Gospel.
2. He was a companion of the apostles and Paul.
3. He authored the Acts of the Apostles.
4. Paul mentions him in two of his epistles.

Nevertheless, not all scholars associate Luke as the author of Acts. Padillo writes, "Attacks on the traditional view were taken up again with renewed interests around the middle of the twentieth century by individuals such as Philipp Vielhauer. He argues that the theology of Paul, as found in his genuine epistles, is strikingly different from that presented in the speeches of Acts."[12] Thus, there is a "climate of suspicion"[13] that makes it difficult to maintain the traditional view of Luke's authorship.

Historical Analysis of Acts

The chosen pericope, Acts 20:17-38, primarily occurs in Ephesus, now located in Turkey, near the "Aegean Sea and was a Greek Trading center that was important to the

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[9] Padilla, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 22.

[10] Padilla, The Acts of the Apostles, 22.

[11] Padilla, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 23.

[12] Padilla, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 22.

[13] Padilla, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 21.

Mediterranean region."[14] Paul introduced Christianity to Ephesus in the first century, when the local Christian community comprised the seven Asian churches mentioned in Revelation by Apostle John. However, some believe the city began in the eleventh century. Myths and legends surround Ephesus's history, and one legend maintains "that as Androclos searched for a new Greek settlement, he turned to the Delphi oracles for guidance. The oracles told him a boar and fish would show him a new location."[15] Still, "another legend says Ephesus was founded by the Amazons, a tribe of female warriors, and that the city was named after their queen, Ephesia."[16]

Ephesus was a crucial harbor and vital communication link between the East, Greece, and Rome. Founders strategically positioned Ephesus to facilitate trade and cultural exchange. It was "the gateway through which the West accessed the East."[17] The Greco-Roman society emphasized "education, philosophy, and the pursuit of excellence."[18] Most teachers and philosophers had higher positions in society and were considered vital contributors to the intellectual and moral development of individuals and the community.[19] During the Roman Empire, Ephesus thrived as a trading city and gained

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[14] "Ephesus," https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-greece/ephesus.

[15] "Ephesus," https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-greece/ephesus.

[16] "Ephesus," https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-greece/ephesus.

[17] Mehmet Cetinkaya and Oter Zafer, "Sustainable Valorization of Cultural Heritage via Tour Guides Turkish Case of Ephesus Ancient City," *PASOS Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural* 13, no. 6 (2015): 1405.

[18] James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL, 1999), 18.

[19] W. M. Ramsay, "Ephesus," *The Biblical World* 17, no. 3 (March 1901): 169, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3136817.pdf.

prominence as the capital of the province of Asia, as Emperor Hadrian recognized.[20]

The city benefited from the natural course of trade and attracted vast crowds of visitors. Ephesus was the residence of the proconsul during their provincial progress. King Lysimachus foresaw the city's potential and built fortifications in a strategic location defended by "hills and protected by the shallows and islands of the gulf."[21] However, Lysimachus' plans were incomplete due to his untimely death, and the new city, initially named Arsinoe after his wife, was later renamed Ephesus. Ephesus was divided into an eastern and western part, with the eastern part, more extensive than the western, housed notable features such as the "double hill called Pion, the stadium, the great theatre, the forum, and various streets, buildings, arenas, and docks."[22] After falling to the Persian Empire in 546 B.C., it was renamed "Arsineia by Alexander the Great."[23]

Ephesus had a significant religious history predating its political significance. It existed as a center of religion for centuries and millennia, with notable figures like Saint Paul and Saint John visiting and challenging Artemis' cults. In addition, Christianity became the official religion of the city.[24]

Financial support for teachers and leaders was a recognized practice in this cultural setting, with patrons, often wealthy or benefactors, "therefore, it was not unusual for the Church to incorporate some of the good values from the benefaction systems of

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[20] Ramsay, "Ephesus," 4.

[21] Ramsay, "Ephesus," 169.

[22] Clive Foss, *Ephesus After Antiquity: A Late antique, Byzantine, and Turkish City* (Cambridge, NY: CUP Archive, 1979), 2.

[23] Ramsay, "Ephesus," 176.

[24]Sjef van Tilborg, "Chapter Three: Embedding John in the City Life of Ephesus" in *Reading John in Ephesus* (New York: Brill, 1996), 63.

that time. [25] They provided support in monetary gifts, the provision of housing, and the supply of necessities, which patrons did in exchange for prestige, honor, or the advancement of a particular philosophical or religious cause. In return, the teacher would provide intellectual guidance, mentorship, and spiritual teachings to the patron and the wider community. Within the religious sphere, temples and religious organizations often had systems to support their priests, clergy, and teachers. "This support structure facilitated the continuation and dissemination of religious and philosophical knowledge, ensuring that leaders could focus on their spiritual and educational roles without worrying about material needs."[26] In Acts 19:23-27, the influence of the Artemis cult and its economic impact on Ephesus is evident. Demetrius, a silversmith, expresses concern that the teachings of Paul, which denounce idols made by human hands, would lead to a decline in the demand for their silver shrines of Artemis. The all-encompassing devotion to the deity Artemis, expressed through the grandeur of her shrine and the ubiquitous practice of her rites prevalent throughout the region, "bespeaks the unparalleled significance, both cultural and religious, with which the populace of Ephesus during that age regarded her."[27]

The financial contributions from devotees, offerings, and donations played a crucial role in sustaining the religious institutions and the individuals who served within them. Therefore, the early Christian community relied on financial support for teachers

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[25] Nathan Nzyoka Joshua, *Benefaction and Patronage in Leadership: A Socio-Historical Exegesis of the Pastoral Epistles* (London, UK: Langham Publishing, 2018), 3.

[26] Mark J. Lee, "Emulating Paul's Ministry Leadership in a Diverse and Changing Cultural Landscape" (DMin diss., Liberty University, Lynchburg, 2024), 29.

[27] Christina L Brinks, "'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians:' Acts 19: 23-41 in Light of Goddess Worship in Ephesus," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2009): 782.

and leaders, drawing on the cultural framework. The apostles relied on "believers' generosity to sustain their ministry,"[28] allowing them to focus on preaching, pastoral care, and community administration. Paul's approach to financial support diverged from the normative model. Still, he emphasized resourcefulness and exertion to provide provisions for himself and his companions, setting an example of independence, alleviating church burdens, and countering accusations of financial exploitation.

Unit of Text

Although Acts 20:34 is the targeted text, it is essential to situate it within Acts 20:17-38. The text unit focuses on Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders, addressing their challenges in his absence. Paul's farewell speech emphasizes hard work, self-sufficiency, and helping the weak, citing Jesus' words of generosity and selflessness. Paul's farewell address is a powerful testament to the significance of giving, contentment, and liberation from the grasp of greed and covetousness. Within this speech, Paul embodies the principles of selflessness, diligence, and the immeasurable blessings that result from a generous disposition. His example is a powerful reminder for pastors and believers, especially in the context of the rising challenges posed by the unchurched generation, negative scrutiny of the Church, and an increased cost of living.

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[28] Steven E. Bussey, "Thriving in Adversity: The Organizational Strategy That Transformed a City," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*, *8* no.1 (Fall 2018): 124.

Detailed Analysis of Acts 20:17-38

Paul's farewell speech in Acts 20:17-38 serves as a means of instruction as he outlines the characteristics of church leaders. In this pericope, "Paul supplies the church of every age with the essential role model and curriculum for a course in leadership training."[29] Some scholars suggest the farewell speech serves as Paul's "last will and testament to a gathering of close friends and associates."[30] This speech concludes his mission trip to Ephesus. In Acts 20:17, Paul intimates that he is speaking to the laity and church leaders.

Verses 17 and 18 form the speech's introduction, illustrate the sentiments of legacy and resemble an obituary even though Paul is not at the point of death. The words are "enclosed by an apologia of his past ministry at Ephesus, which he characterizes as faithful both to his prophetic calling (vv. 18b-21) and to his congregations (vv. 26-27)."[31] While this block of scripture serves as a legacy speech, the words are also reminiscent of a defense of his work in Ephesus. Paul speaks about "how I lived among you"[32] while stating "the disposition of his pastoral obligations to the Ephesian church."[33] In essence, Paul emphasizes that he "did not shrink from doing anything helpful."[34]

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[29] Robert W. Wall, *"*Acts 20:17-38, Paul's Speech of Succession," in *New Interpreter's Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015), 227.

[30] Wall, *"*Acts 20:17-38, Paul's Speech of Succession," 223.

[31] Wall, *"*Acts 20:17-38, Paul's Speech of Succession," 223.

[32] Wall, *"*Acts 20:17-38, Paul's Speech of Succession," 223.

[33] Wall, *"*Acts 20:17-38, Paul's Speech of Succession," 223.

[34] Wall, *"*Acts 20:17-38, Paul's Speech of Succession," 223.

The tone of Paul's speech in verses 22-23 shifts from reflection of personal work to prophecy. This shift is evident as Paul foretells, "suffering awaits him. Jerusalem is no different from what he expects in every city since the Lord prophesied that his mission could result in Paul's suffering for his sake."[35] In Acts 9:15-16, Paul intimates that suffering results from preaching the Gospel. Also, Paul suggests that this will be the last time he will be in face-to-face fellowship with those he worked with while on assignment in Ephesus.

Meanwhile, in the broader context of Acts 20:17-38, verse 34 provides a glimpse into Paul's character, values, and commitment to the Gospel. This passage encapsulates themes of humility, self-sufficiency, responsible stewardship, and community support. With its emotional weight and the personal touch of Acts 20:34, Paul's farewell address leaves a lasting impression on the Ephesian elders and modern readers, inspiring reflection on the nature of ministry, discipleship, and sacrificial service.

In Acts 20:34, Paul continues his missionary journey, traveling through various regions. He visited Macedonia and Greece, encouraging believers along the way. In Troas, Paul preaches a sermon until midnight. During the sermon, a young man named Eutychus falls from a window and is miraculously revived. Paul then proceeds to Miletus and calls for the church elders in Ephesus, delivering a heartfelt farewell speech, encouraging them to be vigilant in their leadership and warning them of future challenges. The chapter concludes with tearful goodbyes as Paul sets sail toward Jerusalem. Paul outlines his efforts to support himself in Ephesus, a church he had previously performed in Corinth (Acts 18:1-4).

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[35] Wall, *"*Acts 20:17-38, Paul's Speech of Succession," 224.

Despite not being prone to vainglory, he holds up the Gospel that Christ preached to all people and points to his life as an example for others, showing that whatever badges of worldly honor he may wear are insignificant. Jesus now formally delegates authority and administration of the Church in Ephesus to the elders, reminding them of his leadership style. Paul tells the elders that he did not travel to Ephesus to collect money but to evangelize both Jews and Greeks to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ Acts 20:33. He labored when he wasn't preaching to avoid his desire for wealth, tainting the message he was trying to deliver.

The chapter also emphasizes the responsibility of leaders to shepherd and care for their flock, emphasizing the spiritual well-being of those under their care. Although Paul had reminded the elders that through their arduous toils, they were obliged to assist the feeble and recall the wise saying of the Savior, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," they had grown forgetful. Paul appears to hold contradictory views regarding his dual-calling ministry in his writings, questioning who would voluntarily serve in the military at their own financial risk. He rebukes the Corinthian Church for believing they were not obligated to provide him with financial support and asks who would voluntarily serve in the military at their own financial risk (Acts 20:35).

Paul reminds the Corinthians of his character so they may have confidence in his words. The Church in Thessalonica was founded despite opposition and appears to have developed a level of integrity lacking in the Church in Corinth. With sophistry and grace, Paul, in his epistle, reassures the congregation of believers in Thessalonica that it is not his design or endeavor to oppress them in any fashion (1 Thessalonians 2:9). Therefore, Acts 20 emphasizes the importance of faithful and dedicated ministry, fellowship, and

community among believers. Paul's interactions demonstrate mutual support, accountability, and encouragement.

Detailed Analysis of Acts 20:34

"You yourselves know."

Paul's first phrase to address the congregation in Ephesus is, "You yourselves know."[36] This expression signifies the deep personal connection Paul shared with the Ephesian elders he was addressing, a bond forged through shared experiences and a collective commitment to the mission of proclaiming the good news. Scholar Christopher Stenschke, in an article, "Lifestyle and leadership according to Paul's statement of account before the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-35," argues that Paul used the phrase to establish the credibility of Paul's claims about his lifestyle and leadership during his ministry in Ephesus. It serves as a means for Paul to appeal to the firsthand knowledge of the Ephesian elders, establishing the credibility of his claims about his ministry. Stenschke notes that while the elders could verify certain aspects of Paul's ministry, such as his ceaseless efforts and displays of emotion, other claims relied on the audience taking Paul's word. Stenschke writes that Paul "would lose his credibility if the audience knew or could easily point out that his description of his ministry was inaccurate."[37] For example, the elders cannot independently verify whether Paul declared everything

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[36] Acts 20:34.

[37] Christoph W. Stenschke, "Lifestyle and Leadership According to Paul's Statement of Account Before the Ephesian Elders in Acts 20: 17–35," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* (Pretoria) *76*, no. 2 (2020): 8.

profitable or the whole counsel of God. However, Stenschke suggests that within the framework of Luke's account, which includes parallels with Paul's letters, "there is a general convergence that suggests a fair representation of Paul's lifestyle and leadership."[38]

Moreover, "You yourselves know" may imply that the audience knows the challenges and realities facing the Church and the pastor's financial support. It resonates with the need to address the skepticism and negative perceptions that exist within the congregation. Oropeza argues that Paul does not directly address the controversies and disputes surrounding his ministry and message because he "thought of himself not as abandoning his Jewish heritage but fulfilling it as an apostle of Israel to the Gentiles."[39] Therefore, using this phrase, "You yourselves know," was a way of acknowledging his work and his support to the Christians. Some scholars believe that Luke, the author of Acts, was a devoted admirer of Paul and had apologetic purposes in his portrayal.

While this raises the question of potential bias, Stenschke suggests that the overall depiction aligns with knowledge about Paul from his writings.[40] This provides valuable insights into the importance of lifestyle and leadership for the early Christian community. Based upon Acts 18:3, the Ephesian elders bore witness to Paul's exemplary manner of life, including his work with Apollos in Corinth and his mention of supporting himself through physical labor. Clarke argues that the verse portrays those Christians and

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[38] Stenschke, "Lifestyle and Leadership," 8.

[39] Brisio Oropeza, J., *Jews, Gentiles, and the Opponents of Paul: Apostasy in the New Testament Communities, Volume 2: The Pauline Letters* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012), 16.

[40] Christoph W. Stenschke, "A Mission Made to Last: Paul as a Sustainable Leader According to the Book of Acts," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 44, no. 1 (April 2023): 4.

followers who needed to imitate Paul's example, especially his model of himself, Christ, and God, by looking at what he was doing. This lesson teaches ministers and congregations alike the importance of rejoicing in the privilege of proclaiming the Gospel, even if it means toiling for one's daily bread.[41]

Stenschke states, "Paul not only establishes communities and revisits them regularly but also sees to the structures necessary to ensure their ongoing existence."[42] Therefore, Paul's farewell speech to Ephesus assured that his words were not mere speculations but facts about his achievements. He draws upon their shared experiences and intimate understanding of his character and actions, lending authenticity to his message. This personal connection between Paul and the Ephesian elders bolsters the impact of his message by fostering a sense of solidarity and mutual respect.

"These hands have ministered to my necessities."

The phrase "these hands have ministered to my necessities" in Acts 20:34 symbolizes Paul's physical labor and self-sufficiency, emphasizing his commitment to provide for his necessities and avoid burdening the Ephesian Church. By using his hands for labor, Paul could sustain himself with the essentials of food and clothing. While he had the right to expect financial support as a minister of the Gospel, there were situations and locations where he chose to forgo that privilege. He did this to avoid hindering the Gospel's initial spread, prevent burdening the churches, and counter any accusations that false teachers might make against him. Additionally, Paul supported himself and assisted

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[41] Andrew David Clarke, "'Be Imitators of Me:' Paul's Model of Leadership," *Tyndale Bulletin* 49, no 2 (1998): 330.

[42] Stenschke, "A Mission Made to Last," 4.

others through his labor. Scholar W. O. Vaught argues that the phrase indicates Paul's reference to his manual labor and self-supporting ministry in Ephesus, empathizing with his humility and willingness to support and work to finance the ministry.[43]

Paul's commitment to his apostolic ministry is evident in his dedication to preaching and engaging in practical acts of service. Holmes Rolston argues that "our churches are sadly in need of the stewardship program."[44] Paul's manual labor in Ephesus and throughout his ministry demonstrates stewardship, humility, work ethic, and dedication to the Gospel. This choice demonstrates self-sufficiency, resourcefulness, and a desire to remove stumbling blocks to the spread of the Gospel. Paul's work ethic is an example for other ministers, emphasizing the importance of a holistic approach to ministry that embraces both spiritual and practical aspects. This encouragement indicates that "Paul does not have to be in the scene for them to be effective pastors."[45] The phrase "these hands have ministered" emphasizes the importance of pastors' work and labor in addressing financial challenges, alleviating the burden on the congregation, and mitigating skepticism about financial matters.

Pastors should be actively involved in their financial support and demonstrate transparency and accountability. "Engaging in meaningful work and contributing to their labor can alleviate financial strain on small to medium-sized churches," particularly in

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[43] W. O Vaught, "A Solemn Charge and a Tearful Fairwell," https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1098&context=vn_acts.

[44] Holmes Rolston, *Stewardship in the New Testament Church: A Study in the Teachings of Saint Paul Concerning Christian Stewardship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), 1.

[45] Vaught, "A Solemn Charge and a Tearful Fairwell," 3.

the face of declining attendance and rising living expenses.[46] Paul's self-sufficiency and lack of financial dependence on the Ephesian Church have significant implications for pastors.

Scholar Aaron Earls writes, "By focusing on bivocational ministry, Pastors can navigate financial challenges and address skepticism from the unchurched generation." [47] This approach demonstrates integrity, alleviates financial strain on the Church, and faithfully proclaims the Gospel in a changing cultural landscape. Paul's ability to support himself through labor set him apart, demonstrating his commitment to not burdening the Ephesian believers and avoiding financial exploitation or impropriety. This self-sufficiency counterbalanced his changing attitudes toward financial support for pastors, especially within the unchurched generation.

"And to those who were with me."

In the final phrase of Acts 20:34, Paul mentions those who served with him and highlights the communal nature of his support,[48] exemplifying his generosity and care for others. This communal support has implications for addressing the changing attitudes of the unchurched generation and promoting a culture of collaboration and care within the Church. Kuist focuses on the psychological elements in Paul's appeal to the intellect and his pedagogical methods. In the broader context of Acts 20:34, while addressing the

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[46] Johnny McWilliams, *God's Ownership Meets Money Management: How to Be a Good and Faithful Steward* (Myrtle Beach, SC: Zero In Financial Press, 2022), 18.

[47] Aaron Earls, "Reaching the Unchurched Generations," Lifeway Research, April 1, 2022, https://research.lifeway.com/2022/04/01/reaching-the-unchurched-generations.

[48] Howard T. Kuist, "Psychological Elements in St. Paul's Appeal," *The Journal of Inductive Biblical Studies* 2, no. 2 (2015): 87.

Ephesian church elders and recounting his ministry, Paul emphasized the selfless hard work to which he had devoted himself. This phrase indicates that Paul worked to support himself and provided for those with him, likely referring to his companions and fellow workers in his missionary journeys.

Kuist states, "Paul's mission and the church's participation within it assumes a place of priority within his treatment of community matters."[49] Despite confronting adversities as heavy as the burdens referenced in his teachings, Paul appealed to fellow devotees of Christ to uphold their shared faith's precepts by sustaining him through those tribulations. Therefore, Paul's appeal to the intellect and attention of his audience included theoretical or abstract concepts while it encompassed practical examples of living out one's faith and supporting others.[50]

According to Kuist, Paul's pedagogical methods, which "largely serve as the medium for studying the manner of his pedagogy," involve engaging his audience's attention through various means, such as a direct address, dramatic actions, and appealing to their curiosity.[51] St. Paul demonstrated the practical application of his teachings by highlighting his actions of ministering to his necessities and those of his companions. The article's advocation for an approach focusing on practical relevance and leading through personal example coheres with the psychological precepts explored. These precepts emphasize the importance of connecting insights to the shared concerns and familiarities of those receiving instruction. Therefore, being bi-vocational allows pastors to have a

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[49] Kuist, "Psychological Elements in St. Paul's Appeal," 87.

[50] Don Carlos Janes, *The New Testament Financial System* (Abilene, TX: Stonewall Books, 1930), 7, https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1225&context=crs_books.

[51] Kuist, "Psychological Elements in St. Paul's Appeal," 82.

secondary source of income to supplement their financial needs, especially in a context where church attendance and financial support may decline. It can also help alleviate skepticism and concerns regarding the financial support of pastors, as they are not solely reliant on the Church for their livelihood.

Recognizing the strength one gains from fulfilling both personal needs and those of his companions forged an interconnected web of sustenance and comfort between Paul and his disciples. By having another source of income, pastors can better meet their personal financial needs and potentially reduce the burden on smaller churches that may struggle to provide adequate compensation. Paul's willingness to assist his companions financially or in other practical ways emphasizes the importance of mutual support and partnership within the ministry. This practice of supporting one another within the ministry team fostered unity, encouraged cooperation, and strengthened the bonds of fellowship. Therefore, by extending his support to those with him, Paul exemplified the values of compassion, sharing, and communal living. This generosity fostered a sense of unity and strengthened the bonds of fellowship among the co-laborers in the Gospel.

Conclusion

Paul's focus on independence is grounded in Christian doctrine, highlighting the significance of individual accountability and respect for employment. By actively participating in employment and meeting one's needs, faithful show wise oversight and accomplish their heavenly command to be productive members of civilization. The

concept of autonomy also resonates with scriptural guidance on fulfillment and rejecting materialism.[52]

Paul's actions are a powerful model for the Ephesian elders and early Christian community, exemplifying essential Christian virtues such as diligence, selflessness, and servant leadership. His steadfast devotion to arduous labor and selfless ministry shows an exceptional demonstration of genuine concern for others' well-being and a commitment to spreading the Gospel over personal comfort or material gain. Paul's example of hard work and sacrificial service also has implications for the perception of pastors and the Church in the unchurched generation. Paul's selflessness and servant leadership demonstrate a genuine concern for others' well-being and a commitment to spreading the Gospel over personal comfort or material gain.

Paul's example of hard work and sacrificial service also has implications for the perception of pastors and the Church in the unchurched generation.[53] By embracing bi-vocational ministry, pastors can demonstrate these virtues, challenging negative perceptions and fostering a positive view of pastors and the Church. This approach aligns with the values of the unchurched generation, who prioritize authenticity, practicality, and a holistic approach to life and ministry. Through hard work and sacrificial service, pastors can embody Christian virtues that resonate with the unchurched generation, increasing the Church's trust, credibility, and social relevance.

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[52] Terumichi Morikawa, "Ideals of Self-Reliance and Personal Advancement," in *The History of Education in Japan (1600-2000),* ed. Masashi Tsujimoto and Yoko Yamasaki (London, UK: Routledge, 2017), 34.

[53] Lee, "Emulating Paul's Ministry Leadership in a Diverse and Changing Cultural Landscape," 74.

Meanwhile, verse 34 aligns with my proposed project as it aims to explore the viability and benefits of bi-vocational ministry in the modern Church. However, the growing population of those abandoning organized religion, intensifying criticism directed at religious institutions, and escalating financial burdens of existence have culminated in dwindling numbers within their ranks and a substantial percentage of this demographic defecting from their flock. Acts 20:34 suggests that Paul's hands ministered to his necessities and those with him, holding profound implications for the role of pastors, especially in the face of the challenges posed by the rise of the unchurched generation, negative scrutiny of the Church, and the escalating cost of living.

Paul's statements highlight my problem statement by emphasizing the importance of addressing the financial concerns and expectations of the congregation. Paul's words provide a powerful example of bi-vocational ministry and self-sufficiency, requiring Christin leaders to seek employment outside of ministry to address their financial concerns. Pastors can also overcome scrutiny of their personal belongings and finances by engaging in financial integrity and good stewardship of resources, especially in economic downturns and rising living expenses. Paul's practice of tent-making was a common trade in his time, providing a practical example of how ministry leaders can balance their vocational work with their spiritual responsibilities.[54] This historical context underscores the timeless relevance of bi-vocational ministry.

As a bivocational pastor, Paul's words resonate with me. I am convinced that working with my hands provides financial security for my family and me and gives me a

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[54] Neil Summerton, "Leadership and Ministry in the Church," *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal* 30 (1980): 39, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/cbrfj/vols/30.pdf.

sense of independence. While I have a good relationship with my congregation, I also know that nothing is for sure, and nothing is forever. Therefore, if, for some reason, my pastoral relationship with the congregation terminates, my family will not suffer.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Pastors and missionaries have faced several challenges due to the nature of their jobs. Most of these challenges arise due to the overreliance of pastors and missionaries on church support. However, this is becoming more challenging, especially in the modern-day church, where the economy has been challenging, and churches face financial constraints. Therefore, pastors find themselves at a crossroads, grappling with challenges that demand fresh perspectives and innovative solutions. Brett McCracken argues that the church faces challenges due to increased "distrust of authority by young generations,"[1] as most of these people fail to submit fully to the authority of the scriptures and the church. According to researcher Aaron Earls, there is a growing trend of unchurched people in the modern era, with increased criticism towards religious institutions and church leadership.[2] Studies have indicated that between 1984 and 2002, people were well connected with faith; still, statistics have suggested that "nearly six in ten (59%) of these young people who grow up in Christian churches end up walking away from either their faith or from the

[1] Brett McCracken, "21 Challenges Facing the 21st Century Church," (blog), October 27, 2016, https://www.brettmccracken.com/blog/blog/2016/10/27/21-challenges-facing-the-21st-century-church#:~:text=For%20many%20(very%20valid)%20reasons,and%20the%20authority%20of%20Scripture.

[2] Aaron Earls, "Reaching the Unchurched Generations," Lifeway Research, April 1, 2022, https://research.lifeway.com/2022/04/01/reaching-the-unchurched-generations/.

institutional church at some point in their first decade of adult life."[3] This is a significant problem for the church, as the number for "millennials has increased in the last decade, from 44% to 52%, mirroring a larger cultural trend away from churchgoing among the nation's population."[4] Therefore, addressing the significant changes causing an increased departure from the church in the current generation is essential.

According to Dave Ramsey, the church is in a financial crisis. A 2008 survey indicated that "one out of every five households began giving less money to faith institutions. Another 22% stopped giving aid."[5] The increasing cost of living is the primary factor that has reduced contributions and support for the church. In contrast to the past, numerous alterations exist within today's church. The recent drop in attendance and the shift towards the unchurched population are notable developments.[6] While some feel the church owes the pastor financial backing, others disagree. Decreased dedication and a cloud of distrust hover over the church due to historical mismanagement and a current lack of involvement from young people. Some have scrutinized pastors' personal effects like automobile and real estate, attracting criticism. The economic unpredictability has affected our country and the world, but continued dedication is necessary to address current problems.[7] Necessities like fuel, food, and insurance have skyrocketed in cost. Considering

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[3] Barna Group, "5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to Church," September 13, 2013, https://www.barna.com/research/5-reasons-millennials-stay-connected-to-church/.

[4] Barna Group, "5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to Church."

[5] Ramsey Solutions, "The Church in Financial Crisis," September 23, 2021, https://www.ramseysolutions.com/personal-growth/the-church-in-financial-crisis#:~:text=If%20your%20church%20is%20already,are%20specific%20needs%2C%20present%20them.

[6] Lina Molokotos-Liederman, "The impact of the crisis on the Orthodox Church of Greece: a moment of challenge and opportunity?" *Religion, State & Society* 44, no. 1 (2016): 46.

[7] Molokotos-Liederman, "The Impact of the Crisis on the Orthodox Church of Greece," 49.

a decrease in churchgoers, this dilemma might test the capacity of smaller to medium-sized places of worship to cover a pastor's monetary burdens. Therefore, faith institutions might collapse if the church does not develop a strategy like bi-vocational church leadership, which is essential for today's pastors to fund their ministries or the church's service. This paper will examine the challenges facing the church due to unchurched generations, economic shifts, and the role of bi-vocational leadership in missionary Johann Leonhard Dober's case, drawing insights from his work as a Christian.

In 1732 German potter and missionary Johann Leonhard Dober became one of the first two Moravian Brethren's (Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine) missionaries in the West Indies.[8] Driven by his zealous beliefs, Dober tirelessly promoted the teachings of His Savior. Alongside his missionary work, he utilized his pottery skills to support himself and his fellow missionaries. Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravian Church, sent Dober and David Nitschmann to St. Thomas in the West Indies in 1732. Being the initial Protestant missionaries, they encountered various obstacles, particularly resistance from slaveholders. Both Dober and Nitschmann succeeded in forming a small congregation of black affiliates.[9] Alongside improving conditions, they founded a school for the offspring of enslaved people. Although he returned to Europe in 1734, Dober maintained his ties with the Moravian Church, preaching in Amsterdam and Livonia. In that year, 1747, he became a bishop. Dober contributed to disseminating Christianity throughout the West Indies as a forerunner in the Moravian missionary movement. Not only was he a devout

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[8] "Leonhard Dober, the First Moravian Missionary," This Month in Moravian in Moravian History, no. 5, (March 2006) http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/thismonth/06_march_dober.pdf.

[9] Helen Richards, "Distant Garden: Moravian Missions and the Culture of Slavery in the Danish West Indies, 1732-1848," *Journal of Moravian History* 2, no. 1 (2007): 66.

and selfless disciple of God, but his contributions left a profound mark on the lives of countless individuals.

This paper aims to explore the life, work, and principles of Johann Leonhard Dober and demonstrate how his historical context is intrinsically connected to the challenges of bi-vocational ministry in the present day. By examining Dober's experiences within the framework of his time and drawing similarities to the contemporary challenges pastors face, this paper seeks to extract relevant insights that can inform and shape modern pastoral practices to remedy the challenges of the unchurched generation, church skepticism, and economic pressures. The paper has three major sections: the introduction, the task, and the overview. The body covers the life and work of Johann Leonhard Dober, the historical context and relevance, the similar challenges in Dober's era and the modern church, the lessons from Johann Leonhard Dober for bi-vocational ministry, and the application of Dober's principles to modern ministry and lastly the conclusion which sums up the paper. The conclusion of this paper will synthesize our findings, emphasizing the relevance of Johann Leonhard Dober's experiences and strategies for addressing the challenges existing in contemporary ministry.

Johann Leonhard Dober's Life And Modern Ministry

This section focuses on a detailed analysis of Johann Leonhard Dober's life, contributions, and how his experiences align with the concept of bi-vocational ministry in today's context.

The Life and Work of Johann Leonhard Dober
A Brief Biographical Overview and Key Milestones

Johann Leonhard Dober was born in Mönchsroth, Germany, on March 7, 1706.[10] From a potter's household, he emerged as a devout Christian. Learning to read, write, and converse in multiple tongues, he enrolled in the community school. In 1725, Dober converted to Moravianism, a Protestant denomination marked by a strong emphasis on personal spirituality and evangelism.[11] In Berthelsdorf, he expanded his religious and linguistic knowledge as a member of the Moravian community. Dober, alongside another missionary, was sent by the Moravian Church to the West Indies in 1732.[12] He and David Nitschmann reached the island of St. Thomas in August of that year. Although challenges mounted from slaveholder circles, they persistently maintained their resolve to establish a small congregation consisting of black converts. Besides, they sought to better the plight of enslaved individuals and established an institution for their children. In 1734, Dober returned to Europe but remained devoted to the Moravian Church. In Amsterdam and Livonia, he acted as a missionary, and in 1747, he received ordination as a bishop. On April 1, 1766, at sixty years old, Dober died in Herrnhut, Germany.

Among the essential key milestones in Dober's life is his collaboration with David Nitschmann to spearhead Moravian missionary work. Their journey to St. Thomas in 1732 led them to embark on a mission to share the Gospel with the enslaved population.[13] This

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[10] "Johann Leonhard Dober," Hymnary.org.

[11] Faith Cook, "Leonard Dober – a Volunteer Slave," *Evangelical Times*, May 1, 1997, https://www.evangelical-times.org/leonard-dober/.

[12] Jared S. Burkholder, "Johann Leonhard Dober und der Beginn der Herrnhuter Mission," *Journal of Moravian History* 7 (2009): 121.

[13] "Johann Leonhard Dober," https://www.biblicaltraining.org/library/johann-leonhard-dober.

daring move was pivotal in Dober's life and Christian mission history. In 1742, he pioneered the Moravian mission in Labrador. In 1749, he went to America to launch the Moravian mission there. Driven by a passion for Christianity, Dober ventured into international missions, proselytizing the faith across the West Indies and farther afield.[14] His ground-breaking efforts as a Moravian mission pioneer forever altered the lives he touched.

Dober's Contributions and Key Aspects of His Ministry and Teaching

Johann Leonhard Dober significantly contributed to the ministry. For instance, he was committed to missionary work, depicted in the first Moravian missionary expedition to the West Indies, where he and David Nitschmann set sail to reach the enslaved population. The mission described Dober's aspect of cross-cultural engagement and a dedication to bringing hope to the marginalized and unreached.[15] This is an essential aspect that the modern church must focus on to support the less fortunate, increasing its performance as it would stand as a place of hope and support. His example of the mission inspired others to follow suit, establishing a vibrant and influential global mission movement.[16] This movement played a pivotal role in reshaping the landscape of global Christianity and contributing to spreading the Gospel to previously unreached corners of the world. Serwalo argues that "cross-cultural congregations are facing challenges in

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[14] "Leonhard Dober, the First Moravian Missionary," http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/thismonth/06_march_dober.pdf.

[15] Cook, "Leonard Dober – a Volunteer Slave."

[16] Victoria Louise Boyd, "The Moravian Church – a Hidden Seed," *From the Ends of the Earth* (blog) January 6, 2019, https://fromtheendsoftheearth.com/2019/01/05/the-moravian-church-a-hidden-seed/.

uniting members of their congregations."[17] This shows that churches need to adopt an approach to unite these consecrations by encouraging the group leaders and the members to embrace church leadership.

Dober presented an excellent engagement with the congregation within the Moravian Church as he emerged as an inspirational figure through his direct engagement with the community. His community engagement signified humility and servant leadership, which the church leaders must show the congregation in the unchurched society as it would enable most Christians to confide in their leaders fully.[18] Some scholars argue that servant leadership increases the commitment and participation of people in church activities and support.[19] Dober's impact on the church was greatly enhanced by his embodiment of servant leadership and humility as he demonstrated a genuine concern for the needs of others and readily engaged in acts of practical service. His humility created an environment of approachability, making him a respected figure among fellow believers and those he sought to reach. A saying is, "The shepherd should smell like the sheep." Also, his teachings and interactions resonated with a call to compassion and a genuine connection with the spiritual needs of the people.[20]

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[17] Philip Silas Serwalo, "Equipping pastors for a narrative approach to ministry in a cross-cultural context" (PhD diss., North-West University, 2019), 3, https://repository.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/33683/Philip%20Serwalo%20%2024799408.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1.

[18] Earls, "Reaching the Unchurched Generations."

[19] Baek-Kyoo Brian Joo, Sangwon Byun, Soebin Jang, and Insuk Lee, "Servant Leadership, Commitment, and Participatory Behaviors in Korean Catholic Church," *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* 15, no. 4 (2018): 336.

[20] "Missionaries Against Terrible Odds," Christian History Institute, christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/missionaries-against-terrible-odds.

In Acts 20:34, Paul emphasizes that church leaders should work and have their source of income instead of relying on the church for support, which could lead to criticism and decreased church attendance. This signifies the principle of sacrifice. Dober's ministry philosophy was grounded in sacrificial love and service.[21] He preached these values and lived them out in his interactions with others. His willingness to leave behind the comforts of home to serve in challenging and unfamiliar environments attested to his genuine commitment to Christ's command to love and serve others selflessly.

Furthermore, Dober advocated for Holistic Ministry through individuals' spiritual and practical needs.[22] His missionary work was not limited to proclamation alone; he sought to meet the tangible needs of the communities he served. This holistic approach mirrored his belief in addressing human life's spiritual and physical aspects. Dober was able to confront challenges such as cultural barriers, adverse conditions, and personal risks with unwavering resolve. His fearless pursuit of God's call in the face of adversity remains an enduring testament to his courage, which depicts a legacy of inspiration. His commitment to bi-vocational ministry, sacrificial service, and holistic engagement can offer valuable insights into addressing the challenges of the unchurched generation, skepticism towards the church, and financial constraints modern pastors face.

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[21] Boyd, "The Moravian Church – a Hidden Seed."

[22] "Missionaries Against Terrible Odds," christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/missionaries-against-terrible-odds

Historical Context and Relevance

The ministry has significantly changed and transformed in the past two centuries regarding theology, methods, technology, gender, and culture. Examining the two modes of ministry is the key to identifying the modern-day challenges and how they impact the church and the Gospel. According to Schmotter's article, the church and pastoral ministry have significantly transformed, and it is evident that "congregational pastors of the eighteenth century did not enjoy the prestige, influence, and social status of their seventeenth-century predecessors."[23] The transformation of how the church operates has led to the loss of dominance in the clergy, attributed to the rise of "secular professionals," which impacts the church and needs to be addressed.[24] In the eighteenth century, theology centered on traditional understandings of the Bible and Christian doctrine, where the ministry typically focused on preaching and teaching.[25] This vital contribution contributed to several benefits to the church, like religious authority and natural stability during that time.[26] This has differed in the twenty-first-century ministry, where theology is more diverse, with many different approaches to interpreting the Bible and understanding the Christian faith. In the eighteenth century, interpretations of the Bible's teachings were traditionally and widely accepted as the absolute authority on religious doctrine and

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[23] James W. Schmotter, "Ministerial Careers in Eighteenth-Century New England: The Social Context, 1700-1760" *Journal of Social History* 9, no. 2 (1975): 249.

[24] Schmotter, "Ministerial Careers in Eighteenth-Century New England," 259.

[25] Moyra Haslett, "Believing 18th-Century Fiction: Reading Novelism and Theology in Thomas Amory's The Life of John Buncle, ESQ (1756)," *Literature and Theology* 32, no. 4 (2018): 441.

[26] Gerald O'Collins, *Tradition: Understanding Christian Tradition* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 118.

ethics.[27] Religious leaders were pivotal in forming these perceptions through their teachings and interpretations, as they were commonly viewed as emissaries connecting the divine with the public. As religious figures and establishments progressively lost their power to convince over the rising new age, there was discernibly deteriorating authority and esteem once commanded by clergy and religious divisions in the modern public eye. The traditional role of clergy as intermediaries between God and the people has shifted, with many individuals seeking a more direct and personal connection to their faith, leading to a democratization of theological interpretation, with believers engaging in their theological reflections.[28]

The article penned by Jacob outlines how diverse kinds of spiritual zealotry surfaced across Europe and North America during the eighteenth century, questioning established religious doctrines and organizations while frequently campaigning for a restoration of what such radical proponents envisioned as more genuine or early styles of Christianity.[29] Emerging concurrently during this time were the Pietists, Quakers, Moravians, Methodists, and Anabaptists, among other diverse religious movements, all of which notably emphasized that authentic faith ought to involve a personally transformative encounter with the divine rather than merely intellectual assent.[30] Radicalization also led to the emergence of rivals, new denominations, increased social engagement, biblical favs,

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[27] Jack Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 49.

[28] Amos Yong, *The Hermeneutical Spirit: Theological Interpretation and Scriptural Imagination for the 21st Century* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017), 29.

[29] Margareth Jacob, "The Nature of Early Eighteenth-Century Religious Radicalism," *Republics of Letters: A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics, and the Arts* 1, no. 1 (2009): 8.

[30] Jacob, "The Nature of Early Eighteenth-Century Religious Radicalism," 6.

and criticism of institutional religion. Early missionaries like Johann Leonhard Dober encountered these challenges as they had to adapt to the norms and changes in the religion due to radicalization. The transformation has shown itself in the twenty-first century, where ministry is more holistic, incorporating various methods, such as counseling, social services, and community organizing. Indeed, this new era has borne witness to ever-greater levels of cultural assortment and faith-based diversity across the globe. The diversity of worldviews, beliefs, and religions encountered has tended to cultivate a more inclusive and open-minded theological disposition that appreciates differing perspectives.

In the eighteenth century, ministers had limited access to technology, and communication was limited primarily to handwritten letters, printed materials, and face-to-face interactions. The spread of religious teachings relied heavily on personal interactions and the availability of printed materials.[31] The twenty-first century is an information age, and digital transformation is shaping the country, so it must find a way to remain relevant.[32] In the twenty-first century, ministers use technology extensively, such as social media, video conferencing, and online education. According to Adam Fenner, there is increased secularization of philosophy and institutions, the shrinking of church attendance, and low attraction and retention of youths in the churches.[33] These have led to more difficulties in meeting contemporary audiences' human and spiritual needs. Interfaith dialogue and ecumenical efforts have become more common, fostering cooperation and understanding among different faith traditions. Proverbs 1:5 emphasizes the importance of

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[31] O'Collins, *Tradition,* 112.

[32] Adam Fenner and Sharon Aka, "Relevant Ministry in the Twenty-First Century: Continuing Education for Ministry," *Ministry Magazine* 89 no. 2 (February 2017): 29.

[33] Fenner, "Relevant Ministry in the Twenty-First Century, 29.

wisdom leading to continuous learning, and 2 Peter 1:8 specifically addresses ministers, underlining those developing essential qualities and growing in them prevents ineffectiveness and unfruitfulness in one's understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ. These verses highlight the Bible's message that the ongoing pursuit of knowledge and personal growth is crucial. Scholars employ historical-critical methods, literary analysis, and sociological insights to understand biblical texts better. This critical approach challenges some traditional interpretations and encourages a more nuanced understanding of scripture. Therefore, the postmodern worldview emphasizes the relativity of truth and the importance of personal narratives, has influenced theological thinking, and advocates for a more open and dialogical approach to interpreting the Bible, accommodating a variety of perspectives and experiences.

In the eighteenth century, ministry primarily involved men, and ministries were often closely tied to societal structures and hierarchies.[34] The church played a central role in many communities, and clergy were respected figures. Today's ministries frequently face challenges related to declining church attendance and skepticism toward religious institutions. Pastors may need to engage more actively in social issues and community outreach to maintain relevance. Contemporary issues related to social justice, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, and environmental stewardship have prompted theological reflection and reinterpretation of traditional doctrines. Considering these concerns, many theologians and religious communities are reevaluating their beliefs and practices. Therefore, in the eighteenth century, conventional Christian doctrine offered cultural

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[34] David Hampton and Myrtle Hull, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society 1740-1890* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 24.

stability, community cohesion, ethical guidance, and religious beliefs about salvation and the afterlife.[35] These teachings shaped individuals' views on salvation and the path to redemption and were central to the curriculum in many schools. Education and literacy also emphasized religious instruction, with literacy rates linked to reading and understanding religious texts. Traditional Christianity also significantly impacted political structures and decision-making, as it informed leaders' beliefs and values, and the church played a role in governance.[36] Theological reflection in the eighteenth century was rooted in classical approaches, strongly influenced by Enlightenment philosophy and systematic theology.

However, the ministry has become more holistic in the twenty-first century, encompassing various methods and approaches beyond traditional religious practices. This approach recognizes that spiritual needs are intertwined with physical, emotional, and social well-being.[37] This holistic approach includes pastoral counseling, social services, community organizing, interfaith and interdenominational collaboration, global missions and humanitarian work, education and training, technology and digital ministry, inclusivity and diversity, well-being, holistic discipleship, and personal development.[38] Pastors and religious leaders provide counseling services to address emotional and psychological needs,

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[35] Beverly Trescott Mueller, *The Depiction of Religion in Eighteenth-century English Literature from Swift to Johnson*, (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University, 1999), 65.

[36] Christian Thorne, "Literature and Political Theology in the Eighteenth Century," https://sites.williams.edu/cthorne/fiction/literature-and-political-theology-in-the-eighteenth-century/.

[37] Sixbert Sangwa and Mutabazi Placide, "Ministry and Economic Prosperity, the 21 Century Challenges and Motivations into Ministry," *Open Journal of Business Theology* 1, no. 2 (August 2021): 27.

[38] David Gushee, "Holistic Ministry for the 21st Century (Part 1): The Kingdom Message," Christians for Social Action, March 5, 2015, https://christiansforsocialaction.org/resource/holistic-ministry-for-the-21st-century-part-1-the-kingdom-message/.

while social services and community organizing address social justice issues. The holistic ministry also emphasizes education and training, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose within a faith community.

Synthesis of Modern Challenges Concerning Dober's Era

Johann Leonhard Dober faced challenges like cultural shifts, spiritual skepticism, and economic constraints, which strongly relate to the contemporary issues that pastors face. As discussed below, Dober had to adopt a bi-vocational ministry to overcome these challenges.

Cultural Dynamics, Societal Shifts, and Church Scrutiny

In the eighteenth century, cultural dynamics were undergoing significant shifts, just like today's society. The Enlightenment ushered in an era defined by reason and skepticism, challenging the traditional tenets of religious faith.[39] This intellectual climate resulted in a population increasingly leaning toward secularism and questioning religious authority. Similarly, in the twenty-first century, pastors grapple with a secular culture that often doubts the relevance of religious institutions and doctrines. As in Dober's time, the contemporary unchurched generation may exhibit indifference or skepticism toward Christianity.[40] Societal shifts during Dober's era were marked by a growing influence of

[39] Anton M. Matytsin, *The Specter of Skepticism in the Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), 16.

[40] Earls, "Reaching the Unchurched Generations."

rationalism and a mounting skepticism toward established religious institutions.[41] The Enlightenment started to mold notions and philosophy, pushing against standard religious convictions.[42] Questioning extended to the church, guiding a heightened examination of clergy habits and practices. These commonalities from history reverberate strongly with the questioning and distrust the modern church frequently experiences. Leaders today must navigate unfavorable perceptions and allegations of fiscal impropriety, just as Dober struggled with similar difficulties in his time. Even though separated by centuries, the obstacles facing Dober and those confronted by modern leaders display striking similarities.[43] The emergence of the undisciplined generation in both eras emphasizes the pressing need for pioneering approaches to ministry. The questioning that shaded Dober's interactions with the enslaved residents of St. Thomas in the eighteenth century continues to echo in the questioning aimed toward organized faith. These similarities between past and present challenges emphasize the enduring nature of the issues faced by ministers throughout history.

Economic Constraints

Economic constraints posed a significant challenge for Johann Leonhard Dober, especially during his missionary journey to St. Thomas. The harsh conditions of colonial life and limited resources created economic difficulties. In the contemporary context,

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[41] Magnificent Linda Mndebele, "Communication for Social Change: Communal Development and Self-reliance in Naledi Village" (PhD diss., University of Johannesburg, South Africa, 2021), 86.

[42] Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 93.

[43] Earls, "Reaching the Unchurched Generations."

economic pressures are mounting due to the rising cost of living, which directly affects the financial stability of both pastors and their congregations. While the specific circumstances may differ, the financial strain experienced by Dober resonates with the economic constraints modern pastors face. Economic realities in Dober's time were far from stable, and financial challenges were a prevalent aspect of life. In Acts 20:17, Paul worked hard to ensure that church leaders would follow his example by ensuring Christian missions could last through the self-funding of the pastoral ministries.[44] While admirable, the Moravian Church's commitment to funding missionary endeavors through voluntary donations exposed missionaries like Dober to the complexities of managing finances amidst uncertainty.[45] This mirrors the contemporary financial pressures pastors face, where church attendance and donations may fluctuate due to various economic factors. The similarities between the challenges faced by Dober and those encountered by modern pastors highlight the timeless nature of these issues. The emergence of the unchurched generation in both eras exposes the need for innovative approaches to ministry.[46] The skepticism that lingered among Dober's interactions with the enslaved population of St. Thomas continues to resonate with today's skepticism toward institutionalized religion. The economic challenges Dober navigated offer a historical precedent for pastors grappling

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[44] Christoph W. Stenschke, "A Mission Made to Last: Paul as a Sustainable Leader According to the Book of Acts," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 44, no. 1 (2023): 10.

[45] Benjamin M. Pietrenka, "Religion on the Margins: Transatlantic Moravian Identities and Early American Religious Radicalism" (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 2023), 9. https://escholarship.org/content/qt91g204tv/qt91g204tv.pdf?t=owohhr

[46] Jun Hu, "Communal Living As Missionary Method: A Study of the Tentmakers and the people of Derby, Rustenburg," (master's thesis, University of Pretoria, 2012), 10.

with the modern-day realities of the escalating cost of living and financial constraints.[47] These historical and contemporary comparisons highlight the enduring relevance of studying figures like Dober, whose experiences provide valuable insights into addressing the multifaceted challenges of modern ministry. Therefore, modern pastors can find guidance in navigating the complexities of economic constraints while continuing to serve their congregations faithfully.

Engaging Diverse Communities

Johann Leonhard Dober's missionary work on St. Thomas exposed him to significant challenges, including cultural barriers and language differences.[48] These challenges closely mirror modern pastors' complexities when ministering to diverse congregations in today's globalized world. Pastors are frequently called upon to serve culturally diverse communities, requiring them to develop cross-cultural understanding and practical communication skills, much like Dober's efforts in his missionary work.[49] The similarities between the challenges faced by Dober and those encountered by modern pastors emphasize the timeless nature of these difficulties.[50] The emergence of the unchurched generation in both eras highlights the necessity for innovative ministry approaches. The skepticism that plagued Dober's interactions with the enslaved population

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[47] Sangwa, "Ministry and Economic Prosperity, the 21 Century Challenges and Motivations into Ministry," 27.

[48] "Missionaries Against Odds," christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/missionaries-against-terrible-odds.

[49] D. Werner, "The International Discourse on Ecumenical Diaconia as a Chance to Strengthen the Specific Profile and Potential of Churches as Actors of Eco-Social Transformation—A German Perspective," *Religions* 14, no. 4, *(*April 10, 2023): 2.

[50] Cook, "Leonard Dober – a Volunteer Slave."

of St. Thomas resonates with today's skepticism toward institutionalized religion. The economic challenges Dober navigated offer historical insights for pastors grappling with the modern-day realities of the escalating cost of living and financial constraints.[51] These comparisons between past and present challenges underscore the enduring relevance of studying historical figures like Dober, whose experiences provide valuable insights into addressing the multifaceted challenges of modern ministry.

BiVocational Strategy

Dober's commitment to bi-vocational ministry, particularly during his missionary work, is a remarkable example of balancing the demands of spiritual service with practical needs. His experiences in pottery illustrate a ministry model that addresses the spiritual and material aspects of people's lives. While centuries apart, the challenges Dober and contemporary pastors face exhibit striking similarities. The emergence of the unchurched generation in both eras stresses the imperative for innovative ministry approaches. The skepticism of Dober's interactions with the enslaved population of St. Thomas continues to resonate with today's skepticism toward institutionalized religion.[52] The economic challenges Dober confronted provide a historical reference point for pastors dealing with the contemporary pressures of escalating living costs and financial constraints.[53] These comparisons highlight the enduring relevance of studying historical figures like Dober,

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[51] Mndebele, "Communication for Social Change," 56.

[52] Hartness M. Samushonga, "A Theological Reflection of Bivocational Pastoral Ministry: A Personal Reflective Account of a Decade of Bivocational Ministry Practice Experience," *Practical Theology* 12, no. 1 (2019): 76.

[53] Amos Yang, "What Have Been the Advantages of Bi-Vocational Pastoral Ministry at New Life Community Church in San Jose, California?" (PhD diss., Biola University, 2022), 12.

whose experiences offer valuable insights into addressing the multifaceted challenges of modern ministry.

Relevance to Today's Ministry

Johann Leonhard Dober faced religious disputes that modern pastors recognize. The eighteenth century held varied faiths, excitement over exploring new lands, and cultural changes. The Moravian Church he joined aimed to spread Jesus' message creatively. [54] Currently, leaders encounter various worldviews. Dober's practice of combining his roles as a preacher and a craftsman became a pillar of applicable solutions to current pastoral difficulties.[55] His willingness to use skills from various trades while fulfilling his duties as a minister showed his sensible way of thinking.[56] During his time in Saint Thomas, Dober employed his abilities as a potter to contribute to the community's progress, enabling ongoing ministry.[57] This mixed method fits well with the contemporary need for religious leaders to navigate financial boundaries and develop self-sustaining ministry designs.

Dober's reasons for adopting a dual career path emanate from his profound awareness of his surroundings' financial and communal circumstances. He understood that meaningful ministry regularly necessitates realistic participation in the requirements of

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[54] Burkholder, "Johann Leonhard Dober und der Beginn der Herrnhuter Mission," 122.

[55] Cook, "Leonard Dober – a Volunteer Slave," 26.

[56] Daniel A. Cox, "Generation Z and the Future of Faith in America," The Survey Center on American Life, March 24, 2022, https://www.americansurveycenter.org/research/generation-z-future-of-faith/.

[57] Rüdiger Kröger, *Johann Leonhard Dober und der Beginn der Herrnhuter Mission* (Comenius-Buchhandlung, 2006), 46.

society, and his dual career efforts exhibited a dedication to comprehensive care.[58] His design demonstrates the capability of leaders to take advantage of their skills and talents to financially maintain their ministry and establish real bonds with their congregations. Dober's bi-vocational ministry structure for present-day religious leadership holds significant effects as the cost of living rises and conventional congregation financing evolves. By drawing encouragement from Dober's ability to have two jobs, religious leaders can embrace a versatile technique that acknowledges the need for monetary sustainability without sacrificing the spiritual essence of their role. By accepting their diverse skills and integrating them into their ministries, religious leaders can cultivate genuine relationships with their groups and promote a more substantial church community.

Lessons from Johann Leonhard Dober for Bivocational Ministry

Bridging the Gap between the Societal Segments

One of Dober's most resonant lessons is his ability to bridge the gap between societal segments. In the context of the unchurched generation, modern pastors can learn from Dober's approach. His dedication to engaging with diverse groups through tangible contributions can inspire pastors to create inclusive spaces that cater to a wide range of spiritual seekers.[59] By addressing societal divisions with grace and humility, pastors can emulate Dober's efforts to unite communities under the banner of Christ.

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[58] Gunther Reese, "Von Westmittelfranken in die weite Welt: Der Herrnhuter Missionar Johann Leonhard Dober," Ansbach, Dinkelsbühl, Feuchtwangen, *Rothenburg ob der Tauber* (2016): 68.

[59] Yang, "What Have Been the Advantages of Bi-Vocational Pastoral Ministry at New Life Community Church in San Jose, California?" 20.

A Bi-vocational approach and modern pastoral practices

From the bi-vocational approach of Johann Leonhard Dober, we find that wealth can seamlessly integrate into modern pastoral practices. His method captures a holistic understanding of ministry that harmonizes spiritual calling with practical engagement.[60] By dissecting specific aspects of Dober's approach, we can uncover invaluable lessons for navigating the multifaceted challenges of contemporary bi-vocational ministry.

Balancing Calling and Practicality

Dober's unique capacity to harmonize his ministry with pressing realities forms part of his heritage. This historical reference point is particularly relevant to present-day clergy facing dual ministry and personal health burdens. By embracing spiritual passion and economic responsibility, Dober found a harmonious balance between obligations to serve God faithfully without any limitations.[61] Thus, when ministerial work combines financial burdens with moral accountabilities, these truths deserve our attention.

Navigating Financial Constraints

Dober faced financial challenges much like they do for today's ministers. This twofold approach represents a proactive solution to the challenge at hand. Practical occupations allowed Dober to provide for himself while enriching the lives of others within

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[60] Kristen Plinke Bentley, "Perspectives of Bi-vocational Ministry: Emerging themes in Bi-vocational ministry research at Lexington Theological Seminary," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 48 (2018): 119.

[61] Cook, "Leonard Dober – a Volunteer Slave."

his society.[62] Similarly to how Dober's craftsmanship connected him with the oppressed community on St. Thomas, current shepherds can mend the divide between the sacred sanctuary and the secular sphere.

Societal Expectations and Innovation

Dober's story enlightens us on how to embrace creativity boldly by defying societal standards with unwavering conviction. Against the odds, his bold move challenged the traditional view. [63] Parallel to this, modern pastors must revolutionize traditional frameworks to become fluid in the current cultural climate. Revitalized by fresh methods, ministers may flourish in today's rapidly evolving society.

Harmony of Roles

As depicted by Dober, one can see how achievable it is to combine competencies gained through different areas of church involvement. Harmony between various tasks was achieved through his thoughtful planning, leading to a thriving and influential ministry structure. The harmony embodied Dober's unwavering dedication to expressing his religious convictions in all aspects of existence. Thus, today's pastors can achieve equilibrium between their spiritual obligations and worldly pursuits.

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[62] Bentley, "Perspectives of bi-vocational ministry," 121.

[63] Charles Oduor Onyango, "The Impact of Bi-Vocational Ministry on Church Health: a Comparative Study of the Church of the Nazarene, Kenya Central District and the Anglican Church of Kenya, Nairobi Diocese," (PhD diss., Africa Nazarene University, 2023), 46.

Conclusion

In examining the life and work of Johann Leonhard Dober and drawing parallels to the challenges the modern church faces, it becomes evident that his experiences offer valuable insights and a historical foundation for bi-vocational ministry in today's context. Johann Leonhard Dober's life is an excellent example of his absolute commitment to spreading Christianity, even though he had to deal with the problems of his era. He was part of a bi-vocational ministry through his pottery skills, which he used to stand by himself and his fellow missionaries, thus showing that faith and vocation can be in the same boat without any struggle. Even though he faced opposition and difficulties, his missionary work in the West Indies was the turning point for creating a congregation and a school for the enslaved people, which had a lasting impact. The similarities between the problems that the church was facing in the 18th century, as recorded by Dober, and the issues of the modern religious institutions today are not to be ignored when a comparison of each period is made. Challenges embrace sociocultural dynamics, societal changes, growing church criticism, economic limitations, and the need to reach different communities. The present young generation is the one which is the most anti-established religion and anti-institutional leaders. The unchurched generation, the group of people who do not trust religious institutions or authority, is a significant challenge to the current ministry.

Bi-vocational ministry, an excellent way to solve the problems of modern religion, is presented as an ideal solution through Dober's strong argument. Income sources broadened, and extra support increased. Thus, pastors can delegate the church's financial responsibilities more effectively during times of economic crisis. Bi-vocational pastors are

on their own while serving; therefore, they establish relations with various communities, making their ministry relevant and accessible. The experiences of Johann Leonhard Dober's life can still greatly help the current bi-vocational ministry. Chasing the reconciliation of social strife and its corresponding beliefs may be the bi-vocational practice of Johann Leonhard Dober that pastors can find educational value in and can use to promote their ministry activities in the present. Through the integration of spiritual and practical, pastors may overcome financial problems, be enthusiastic about the faith, and at the same time be accountable for their finances. At the same time, they will be able to deal with social constraints and technological innovations.

Dober's method encourages ministers to care for young people and adjust to the fast-changing environment by overcoming old-fashioned approaches and stimulating new ways of thinking. When the divine obligations of pastors are in sync with their secular dreams, they can create more loyalty with parishioners. Faith, selflessness, and commitment to the spread of Christian teachings are the driving forces that guide pastors to tackle modern-day problems. Joining unconventional professions through adaptability and tactical ingenuity for the greater good and personal development continues to break the philosophy of ministry. Therefore, Dober's heritage is a potent factor in resolving the present ecclesiastical issues. The lessons he learned from his life can tell us that faith and vocation are not necessarily opposed.

On the contrary, when joining in a cooperative and supportive manner, they can reinforce each other to characterize their resilience and adjustment capacity. The church leaders committed to spreading Christianity should be like Dober, who had a constant dedication, flexibility, and persistent focus on their mission and will adapt to the challenges

to make an alive institution that guides people for future generations. While the modern church tries to cope with the new demographic, economic, and societal realities, the bi-vocational ministry structure, which is Dober's structure, acts as a source of hope and a way of life for the church. The church can manage these challenges with resilience, authenticity, and a renewed sense of purpose and continue to play its essential part in the community while bringing a message of trust and optimism to those who are coming to it from embracing the spirit of Dober's mission and applying his insights to the modern ministry.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

With economic realities changing gradually and church patterns transforming over time, societal changes provide the background to this contemporary ecclesial landscape in which a necessity for bi-vocational ministry emerges. The unchurched generation in many ways appear to outnumber those who are churched, which pushes the church to rethink its traditions and tactics.[1] Next, the church comes under heightened scrutiny. Congregants and society themselves peer into how money is dispersed or used within the ecclesial community. Pastoral support is also subject to this scrutiny. The personal finances of the pastors themselves are under an unprecedented public microscope.[2] Economic difficulties are a vivid reflection of the rising cost of living pressure on churchgoers and pastors. Bi-vocational ministry becomes a critical response to the new reality in this changing ecclesial environment. However, no longer a new concept, bi-vocationalism has again taken on unique currency amidst changing trends in the church. The implication is that a need exists to explore the theological foundations of bi-vocational ministry. The idea is to fuse workable, practical solutions with deeply

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[1] Brett McCracken, "21 Challenges Facing the 21st Century Church," October 27, 2016, https://www.brettmccracken.com/blog/blog/2016/10/27/21-challenges-facing-the-21st-century-church.

[2] McCracken, "21 Challenges Facing the 21st Century Church."

rooted theological principles, thus able to remedy the complex problems of today's church. In this changing ecclesial environment, challenges necessitate new answers from leaders.[3]

Practical Theology and Bi-Vocational Ministry

The scope of Practical Theology comprises the practical implementation of theological principles within the practical settings of ministry. It straddles the line between theory and practice, seeking the convergence of the philosophy of the Christian doctrines with the everyday life experiences of individuals and how theological insights are applied in the real world.[4] Unlike other theological disciplines, Practical Theology concentrates on the concrete praxis or application of theology in individuals, communities, and society. Practical theology informs and equips pastors and church leaders with the proper perspective and knowledge about bi-vocational ministry in the contemporary context. Bi-vocational ministry is not the only strategic solution for today's problems; it is also an intentional theological position that alters how we describe pastoral service. It is a call to understanding the divine being more clearly. Examining its earthly aspects and analyzing what clergy should do to ensure Christians remain faithful in the ever-changing church. It claims that the mixing of work and ministry is not a compromise but a realization of the divine redemption scheme which changes the ordinary frames. Examining biblical stories, traditionally done cases, and current reflections show that bivocational ministry goes beyond a mere practical provision solution and out of thoughts of the heavenly care

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[3] Aaron Earls, "Reaching the Unchurched Generations.

[4] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "Toward Greater Understanding of Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16, no. 1 (2012):118.

provision. Hence, practical theology gives practical wisdom and theological direction in addressing the challenges and opportunities that arise from fulfilling the calling and companionship in giving service while multitasking vocational duties.[5] By implementing Practical Theology in bi-vocational ministry practices, pastors can actively address the needs and problems of their congregations and communities. This paper's understanding of Practical Theology concerns the theological basis of bi-vocational ministry during unchurched generations. This section will be instrumental in presenting how even logical principals can adequately address evolving ministry needs and concerns.

Problem Statement

The emergence of the unchurched generation has introduced unique constraints upon the church, undermining traditional forms of congregational support. Skepticism and economic setbacks have now cast their dark shadows over these established forms of pastoral support, putting even the most solid pillars under stress.[6] Congregations are hesitant to support pastors as usual because congregations face declining attendance and financial difficulties.[7] Therefore, this project will focus on creating an effective model that emphasizes the need for pastors to establish multiple income streams to alleviate financial challenges. Bivocational ministry is an urgent responsive strategy to the changing

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[5] Hartness M. Samushonga, "A Theological Reflection of Bivocational Pastoral Ministry: A Personal Reflective Account of a Decade of Bivocational Ministry Practice Experience," *Practical Theology* 12, no. 1 (February 10, 2019): 78.

[6] McCracken, "21 Challenges Facing the 21st Century Church."

[7] Caleb Rothfuss, "Comparing Generation Z and Generation X: The Struggles of Teens Following in the Faith of Their Parents" (PhD diss., Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, 2021), 3, https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2019.1575040.

dynamics of church life. Amid both the rise of an unchurched generation and negative scrutiny combined with rocketing costs, there is mounting pressure on pastors to start a bi-vocational ministry. Influenced by skepticism and economic problems, congregations cannot champion pastors with full financial support.[8] This project's focus examines the basic tenets of a God-centered existence that undergirds and justifies bi-vocational ministry today.[9] Thus, the succeeding Theological Foundation paper will unfold page by page of text, carefully exploring biblical stories and historical precedents of contemporary discourses. Its overall intent is to develop a coherent explanation, providing the bivocational ministry with its theological grounding. This inquiry aims to show that bi-vocational ministry is essential to meeting the challenges stated in the problem. This theological landscape map will represent a firm base for the upcoming DMin project considering the biblical, historical, and contemporary factors involved in this process.

Hypothesis

The decision to pursue bi-vocational ministry is not merely a pragmatic solution for today's church but rather stems from Christian beliefs. Through a systematic theological examination, we will lay down a solid theological theory for bivocational ministry that can contribute to overcoming those challenges. Addressing this hypothesis requires detailed theological research to understand bivocational ministry. For instance, the theological foundation for bivocational ministry is more comprehensive than pragmatism. It goes

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[8] Rothfuss, "Comparing Generation Z and Generation X," 3.

[9] Daniel A. Cox, "Generation Z and the Future of Faith in America," The Survey Center on American Life, March 24, 2022, https://www.americansurveycenter.org/research/generation-z-future-of-faith/.

beyond finding meaning in this ecclesiastical new paradigm amid ancient history and scripture but delves deeper into discovering God's plan of redemption hidden therein. Thus, this theological foundation paper focuses on practical and real-life enterprises to solve common issues facing modern pastors and troupes.

Integration Of Practical Theology With Biblical Foundations Of Bi-Vocational Ministry

The combination of Practical Theology with biblical foundations of Bi-Vocational Ministry gives a holistic grasp of ministry practices in contemporary society. The practical theology method of exploring biblical narratives that presents the tentmaker model, as demonstrated by the Apostle Paul, highlights the application of such stories to the contemporary pursuit of bilateral vocational ministry.[10] It assists pastors in extracting theological concepts from biblical texts and applying them practically to their bi-vocational pursuits. This section applies practical theological themes of divine calling and diverse vocations, the tent maker narrative, bivocationalism, the unchurched generation and how the Jesus' examples and the early churches indicate the role of bivocationalism. Looking into this theological framework reveals far more than a practical solution to today's problems. It is also revelatory of an inspiring witness that faith and service go hand in glove, duty from above conjoined with action on earth.

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[10] Kathleen Cahalan, Carol Lakey Hess, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore, "Teaching Practical Theology: Introducing Six Perspectives," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 12, no. 1 (2008): 82.

Divine Calling and Diverse Vocations

The theological picture of one's calling from God and various vocations within the marketplace is based on foundational perspectives already rooted in biblical narratives, current research, and historical reflections. This paper explores how faith, work, and calling weave through scholarly and theological contributions of key passages. The Bible consistently honors human work's inherent dignity and diversity, exemplified in Genesis 2:15; humanity is shaped as tilling the ground, symbolizing a divinely decoded duty to tend creation through productive activity. Through Practical Theology, Ephesians 4:11-12 intimates a rich tapestry of diverse professions in scripture, from prophets to shepherds and artisans. Thus, faithfulness and specific vocations are not indicative of each other. Kate Jones' study, "Who Am I? Bi-Vocational Ministers and Pastoral Identity," becomes a valuable lens into bi-vocational ministers' challenges, aligning with the contemporary pastoral landscape.[11] The biblical text, Jeremiah 1:5, reinforces the concept of divine appointment, setting individuals apart for specific vocations. Jones' exploration unveils the understanding that embracing bi-vocational ministry is not merely a pragmatic response but an integral facet of pastoral identity, potentially informing the theological foundation of this project.[12]

Darryl Stephens' article, "Bivocational Ministry as the Congregation's Curriculum," addresses the intricacies of bivocational ministry in the context of anxiety

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[11] Kate Jones, "Who am I? Bi-vocational Ministers and Pastoral Identity," (master's thesis, Atlantic School of Theology, 2017), 12.

[12] Jones, "Who am I? Bi-vocational Ministers and Pastoral Identity," 4.

surrounding congregational vitality in North American mainline denominations.[13] The New Testament text, Matthew 9:37-38, emphasizes the plentiful harvest and the need for workers. Stephens proposes a constructive perspective, framing intentional bi-vocational ministry as the congregation's curriculum—an approach involving the entire faith community.[14] The article delves into various facets of bivocational ministry, including vocation, finances, and commitment. Stephens advocates for theological reflection and religious education, offering a pathway for congregations to reimagine their identity and respond to contemporary challenges.[15] The call for religious educators to support this endeavor underscores the transformative potential of bi-vocational ministry in reshaping the church's approach to its mission and communal life.

Additionally, Zeze's exploration of John Calvin's doctrine of vocational calling, as presented in "John Calvin on God's Calling: Service in the church and the World," delves into the profound implications of Calvin's theology for contemporary society.[16] Drawing on Calvin's assertion that every person's occupation is a post assigned by God, the article challenges the narrow view that restricts the term "calling" to ecclesiastical functions. The commentary elucidates how Calvin's teachings on calling extend beyond religious duties, encompassing diverse vocations in the secular world. It underscores the idea that every lawful occupation represents God's calling, aligning with Calvin's belief in God's

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[13] Caleb Rothfuss, "Comparing Generation Z and Generation X: The Struggles of Teens Following in the Faith of Their Parents" (DMin diss., Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, 2021), 3. https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2019.157504056.

[14] Stephens, "Bivocational Ministry as the Congregation's Curriculum," 18.

[15] Stephens, "Bivocational Ministry as the Congregation's Curriculum," 18.

[16] Willie S.D. Zeze, "John Calvin on God's Calling: Service in the Church and the World," *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 5, no. 3 (2019): 601.

sovereignty over all aspects of life.[17] The biblical foundations of vocational calling are highlighted, emphasizing the continuity between the Old and New Testaments. The commentary stresses Calvin's doctrine resonating with biblical narratives in which God calls individuals to specific tasks, occupations, and leadership roles.

Furthermore, the commentary addresses the historical distortion of the meaning of calling during the medieval period, confining the concept to ecclesiastical roles.[18] The Reformers, including Calvin, played a pivotal role in restoring the dignity and biblical essence of vocational calling, challenging the division between sacred and secular spheres.[19] Ultimately, Calvin's teachings portrayed the call to a holistic understanding of vocation, encompassing all aspects of life and work. The commentary suggests that Calvin's emphasis on calling serves as a guide for contemporary society, urging transparency, accountability, and a recognition of the sacredness inherent in various occupations.

Although John Calvin's was pivotal, it did not bring to maturity the practical theology as it is understood in modern society. During the nineteenth century, Friedrich Schleiermacher was influential in advocating for the importance of lived faith experiences.[20] Through his teachings, Calvin taught it was more important to ground theology in the everyday lives of real religious communities.[21] As a result, there was the

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[17] Zeze, "John Calvin on God's calling," 610.

[18] Zeze, "John Calvin on God's Calling," 612.

[19] Zeze, "John Calvin on God's Calling," 615.

[20] Birgit Weyel, "Practical Theology and Religion," in *International Handbook of Practical Theology,* ed. Birgit Weyel, Wilhelm Grab, Emmanuel Lartey and Cas Wepener (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2022), 222.

[21] Weyel, "Practical Theology and Religion," 222.

rise of liberal theology and the social gospel in the late twentieth century that led to the integration of theological teachings into the social and ethical matters of life as is the case in modern society.

The emphasis on work as a divine calling counters the skepticism of the unchurched, which illustrates vocational pursuits can be sacred expressions of faith. Moreover, Paul's bi-vocational strategy dispels the constricting fear in congregations of funding ministerial work and presents a fully flexible model to suit circumstances at ground level.[22] Paul states, "You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions."[23] Paul encouraged the ministers to acknowledge their work and ensure that they collectively contributed to the building the church. This makes differing theological perspectives form a strong base for accepting and appreciating bi-vocational ministry. Thus, through understanding divine calling, this theological support serves as a lens through which pastors can read, respond, and thrive in the complex variety of modern ministry — tied together by this centerpiece amid tightening financial constraints and sporadically changing church dynamics.

Bivocationalism and the Unchurched Generation

The emergence of the unchurched generation presents a dual landscape of challenges and opportunities for bi-vocational ministry. Since pastors view traditional church structures suspiciously, people with a firm footing in the community can overcome

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[22] Armando S. Kole, "The Implications of Paul's Concept of Skenopoiia to the Current Perceptions on Bi-vocational Ministry Among the Churches of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in Western Visayas" (PhD diss., Central Philippine University, 2002), 22.

[23] Acts 20:34.

these challenges. Besides providing services, these pastors get involved in professions that build community trust. Daniel Cox, in his research paper, "Generation Z and the Future of Faith in America," refutes, however, this idea that religious disaffiliation is simply a generational shift. Instead, the story is more complex, one of youths living in religious and social settings different from their parents.[24] The parents of millennials and Generation Z have a trend toward less encouragement for formal worship, influencing religious involvement among children.[25] Childhood religious experiences significantly influence adult religiosity, which has a long-term effect. Individuals disaffiliated from religious affiliations, often making this decision before age eighteen, express skepticism regarding the societal benefits of religion.

Declining organized religion makes reconnecting with individuals during important life occurrences difficult. Disaffiliation is frequently related to personal misfortunes, especially within more traditionalist traditions. Yet despite this slippage, regardless of identity, specifically, religiously engaged members also show higher civic participation. Bi-vocational ministers who coexist with the unchurched and teach them that faith is not irrelevant to ordinary existence are incredibly significant in this setting.[26] By doing so, they actively break down barriers and genuine interactions. In this way, the financial independence of bi-vocational ministers can help ease fears that a church might be undergoing undue influence from its congregations. The biblical text, Acts 2:44-45, states, "All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their

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[24] Cox, Witt-Swanson, and Orrell, "Generation Z and the Future of Faith in America," 2.

[25] Cox, Witt-Swanson, and Orrell, "Generation Z and the Future of Faith in America, 3.

[26] Herbert W. Reese, "An Analysis of a Christian Community in Pasadena, California on the Basis of Acts 2: 44-47 and 4: 32-37" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, 1978), 42.

possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need."[27] This passage reflects a sense of shared responsibility and community support among believers and may even strengthen trust and openness between members within the body of Christ. However, it is crucial to understand that bi-vocationalism isn't just a defensive response against the unchurched phenomenon.[28] It can also be used as an offense when faced with financial issues in church congregations. Financial support for pastoral leadership still takes priority, but the model of bi-vocational ministry does bring in elements of shared responsibility and resource management[29]. The model promotes the relationship between pastors and congregations, driving increased involvement in ministry and overall financial stewardship.

Furthermore, the assorted pastoral backgrounds of bi-vocational clergy provide them with fertile ground to bring unique insights into budget discussions and resource determination. Their contributions make a big difference in sound financial decisions within the church community.[30] As a result, through the integration of Practical Theology with the biblical basis, pastors obtain sound wisdom needed to negotiate the technicalities of bi-vocational ministry, giving rise to holistic approaches that address both callings and ministerial duties. Through this integration, pastors can live and do theology out of the truth in the scripture personally and in their ministries, which results in a transformative

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[28] Cox, Witt-Swanson, and Orrell , "Generation Z and the Future of Faith in America," 3.

[29] Rothfuss, "Comparing generation Z and generation X," 3.

[30] Rothfuss, "Comparing generation Z and generation X," 3.

effect on the congregations and communities.

Integration of Practical Theology With Historical Foundations of Bi-Vocational Ministry

In examining the integration of practical theology with historical foundations of bivocational ministry, a rich tapestry of viewpoints topping off contemporary pastoral practices is evident. Also, Practical Theology, when blended with historical narratives, shows the everlasting relevance of bi-vocational ministry in church history. By studying the lives of early church leaders and reformers who simultaneously undertook two or more vocations, Practical Theology offers aid in understanding the theological foundations upon which their ministry work was built and how pragmatic decisions were made while embarking on those endeavors. Furthermore, evaluations drawn from past experiences guide modern-day pastors with bi-vocational ministries in various cultures.

Early Church and Preaching Orders

Bivocational ministry became an essential and vital instrument for spreading the gospel from tentmaking apostles to itinerant prophets in early church history. The communities of monks, especially those influenced by Benedict of Nursia with their diversity of crafts and trades, which fuses spirituality with active social involvement, personify just what it means to possess self-sufficiency.[31] In this environment, preaching orders like the Franciscans and Dominicans are ideal examples of faith expressed in work. They rely on lay people's support but easily venture into various fields to endeavor

[31] "Ephesus," History, June 22, 2023, https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-greece/ephesus

themselves.[32] Ephesus, based along the eastern coast of modern-day Turkey, was a key trading center for the Greeks. It also had an important role here in this part of the Mediterranean. Its history goes back to the eleventh century BCE when it was laid by Androclus (a prince of Ionia) or taken over later on by Amazon.[33] With its favorable geographic location, Ephesus was an important harbor and a main thoroughfare connecting the East with Greece or Rome. It soon became known as the West's gateway door into Asia itself. One key to Ephesus's eminence was its strategic location, which led to trade and cultural exchange. The Greco-Roman society, the home of Ephesus, valued education, philosophy, and excellence. Preachers and philosophers were highly revered and regarded as necessary for developing intellectual and moral life within society[34]. With such a cultural background, it is easier to understand the problems and opportunities faced by early Christian leaders in practicing their bi-vocational ministry within this social context.

A historical look shows a layered complexity of ministries and something bi-vocational. Apostle Paul combined the task of establishing an early Christian community with that of tentmaking, combining one's life and work so there could be made a whole out of many parts in those days as well! The simple Middle Ages tradition also adds depth to this refined understanding by recording that some monks combined work and worship.[35]

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[32] Ramsay, "Ephesus," *The Biblical World* 17, no. 3 (1901): 167, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3136817.pdf.

[33] Mehmet Yavuz Cetinkaya and Zafer Oter, "Sustainable Valorization of Cultural Heritage via Tour Guides Turkish Case of Ephesus Ancient City," *PASOS Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural* 13, no. 6 (2015): 1405.

[34]James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early* Christianity (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 18.

[35] Paul Schulten, "Humour and Religion in the Greco-Roman World*,"* in *Humour and Religion: Challenges and Ambiguities*, ed. Hans Geybels and Walter Van Herck (New York, NY: Continuum Religious Studies, 2011), 66.

Such historical models cast doubt on the contemporary experience, which limits ministry to a full-time vocation. Therefore, they give a complex picture of the ministry as one dimension in everyday life. Not only did this intentional blending of secular occupations with spiritual callings help to maintain the financial feasibility of ministries, but it also ensured a rewarding mix of experiences in how they interacted one way or another with all kinds of people. The early church and preaching orders are historical landmarks showing that bi-vocationalism was organic and effective in propagating the gospel. Their practices echo the harmonious synthesis of belief and work, seeking a higher calling as an open city where many cultures come together.

Reformation and Beyond

The period of the Reformation, a time for Luther and Zwingli, brought an even more profound continuance and expansion in bi-vocational ministry. During this era, these strongmen, in turn, carried out pastoral work while holding positions within the marketplace. This example shows the intimate relationship between religion and worldly power. [36] The legacy of this interconnected ministry persisted across various denominations, with ministers diversifying into professions such as education, medicine, and social work, embodying the gospel through tangible acts of service.

Under the Roman Empire, Ephesus became an important trading center. In due course, it was even named the capital of the province of Asia by Emperor Hadrian.[37] This

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[36] Daniel Jon Lundquist, "Bi-Vocational Ministry: What Works from the Perspective of Bi-Vocational Ministers and Their Congregants" (DMin., Lancaster Theological Seminary, 2019), 46.

[37] Ramsay, "Ephesus," 169.

position afforded lively trade, drawing vast crowds of visitors, especially for proconsuls visiting the province while on provincial progress; Ephesus was an essential piece in the political jigsaw. Understanding the city's potential, Lysimachus started fortifications but did not complete his plans. Thus, the town was first called Arsinoe after his wife, but Ephesus split into eastern and western parts. Although its political history was significant, a spiritual one also saw Ephesus becoming the religious center for centuries.[38] A handful of renowned scholars came to the city, such as Saint Paul and Saint John, who opened new battles between Artemis cults. Eventually, Christianity became the official religion of the city. The historical backdrop provides the key to understanding how faith fits into larger social processes.

Peering into the stern tradition, especially its Benedictine branch, we find a rich historical model that blends manual labor with spiritual devotion. In their daily lives, monks also cultivated the land and practiced craftsmanship; at the same time, they made sure to pray and contemplate. It overturns traditional divisions between the sacred and secular, offering what amounts to a model of ministry that reflects contemporary hopes for an integrated or holistic type. The Benedictine principle of unity between prayer and work proves that vocation and spirituality are perfectly compatible.[39]Thus, the Reformation period and the subsequent epochs exemplify the flowering of bi-vocational ministry, where leaders embraced diverse roles beyond the pulpit.

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[38] "Ephesus," https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-greece/ephesus.

[39] James B. Murphy, "Opus Dei: Prayer or labor? The Spirituality of Work in Saints Benedict and Escrivá," in *The Charismatic Principle in Social Life*, ed. Luigino Bruni and Barbara Sena (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 108.

Global Perspectives and Contemporary Insights

Stepping outside the outline of Western historical understanding, examining models from other cultures opens a composite that makes us realize how complex and nuanced the shared relationship between religious vocations is.[40] In Africa, clergy often make their way through several odd jobs due to lackluster financial resources.[41] This practice exhibits great ingenuity and resourcefulness within tight economic conditions. This global perspective offers insight into the complexity of bivocational ministry, which transcends cultural boundaries and historical spaces. Still considering the African context, financial constraints have forced clergy to juggle pastoral work with other professions. It illustrates the flexibility and spirit of people who want to develop their areas with limited resources.[42] The highly complex cross-over responsibilities on the African scene rewrite conventional stories about multivocation, reminding us that bivocational ministry is a function of context.[43] It's what one has to do with creative responses, considering a lack of funding from missionary sources.

Recently, there has been a revival of interest in bivocational ministry, which represents a departure for most developed nations from the traditional full-time vocational model. This revival phenomenon is no aberration either. Teachers and leaders could secure financial support from patrons who, generally rich themselves, aided scholars and religious

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[40] Samushonga, "A Theological Reflection of Bivocational Pastoral Ministry," 66.

[41] Kristen Plinke Bentley, "Perspectives of Bi-vocational Ministry: Emerging Themes in Bi-vocational Ministry Research at Bentley Lexington Theological Seminary," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 48 (2018): 115.

[42] Bentley, "Perspectives of bi-vocational ministry," 115.

[43] Gräb Wilhelm, "Practical Theology as Theology of Religion. Schleiermacher's Understanding of Practical Theology as a Discipline," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 9 no. 2 (January 2005): 189.

teachers in exchange for instruction about the intellectual life or guidance on spiritual matters. [44] Linking this historical experience to the modern movement toward bi-vocationalism, it seems that people in ministry today pine for a greater sense of authenticity and more social engagement and financial independence within their line of work. Western societies were not the only ones whose cultural milieu involved financial support of teachers and leaders. The patron had a significant role in supporting philosophers, scholars, and religious teachers of different cultures; an example is Africans.[45] Acts 19: 23-27 describes the economic vitality brought to Ephesus by Artemis, stressing how devotees would fork over money and the close relationship between religious sensitivity that kept up farm work during harvest times. This historical framework helps us understand the early Christian community's reliance upon financial support.

While the normative model involved financial support from believers to sustain ministry, Paul's unique approach diverged from this pattern. Emphasizing resourcefulness and self-sufficiency, Paul set an example of independence to alleviate burdens on the church and counteraccusations of financial exploitation. His pragmatic approach reflects the adaptability of bi-vocational ministry, showcasing the ability to navigate cultural and economic landscapes.[46] Exploring historical models of bi-vocational ministry yields profound lessons for the modern church, emphasizing adaptability, effectiveness, and collaboration. Across different eras, from apostolic tentmaking to early Christian leaders' multifaceted contributions, bi-vocationalism demonstrated remarkable

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[44] Stephens, "Bivocational Ministry as the Congregation's Curriculum," 56.

[45] Samushonga, "A Theological Reflection of Bivocational Pastoral Ministry," 66.

[46] Jones, "Who am I? Bi-vocational Ministers and Pastoral Identity," 18.

versatility. This adaptability is a crucial lesson, urging the modern church to tailor approaches to present challenges. Historical models highlight the effectiveness of engaging diverse communities, blurring clergy-laity lines for comprehensive outreach[47]. This effectiveness in today's unchurched generation suggests bi-vocationalism's potential to connect with various individuals. Through integrating Practical Theology and historical foundations, pastors learn about the adaptability of ministry and the unchanging theological aspects that drive bi-vocational work. Through this integration, historians holistically understand the bi-vocational ministry, and they receive historical wisdom to move the ministry alongside the challenges and opportunities within the present time.

Contemporary Theological Insights

In the rapidly changing world of ministry, many historical paradigms need rethinking. Bi-vocationalism is an intriguing response to shifts in church attendance patterns and levels of financial support, as well as larger social changes. A look into recent theological thinking reveals a vigorous exchange about this ministry model, prompting a reevaluation of traditional viewpoints and an exploration of new horizons.

Bivocational as Witness

Contemporary theologians such as Bruce Allder proffer salient observations on this continuing debate of bi-vocational ministry. Allder takes up bi-vocationalism as a form of

[47] Samushonga, "A Theological Reflection of Bivocational Pastoral Ministry," 66.

discipleship in his article, "Faithful Preparation for Ministry."[48] The text emphasizes the importance of testimony and a sense of bi-vocationalism in fulfilling God's work. Allder argues that through theological reflection, bi-vocationalism becomes a compelling witness. It is rooted in deep discipleship and springs from new possibilities for ministry and mission today. Scholars like Miroslav Volf and Elaine Heath add a sense of nuance to such understanding by pointing out that immersion in secular vocations enriches pastoral roles.[49] Cory MacNeil's doctoral dissertation thoroughly examines the problems encountered by bi-vocational ministers from actual case studies in Northeastern countries like Canada and the United States, as well as an analysis of their scriptural basis.[50]

MacNeil, understandably wanting to increase the effectiveness of bi-vocational pastors in leading churches to fulfill the Great Commission,[51] acknowledges their unique challenges as disciples engaged in making disciples. MacNeil's project involves surveying bi-vocational pastors to analyze their habits and strategies, aiming to provide practical insights for navigating challenges related to time management, work/life balance, evangelism, and discipleship. MacNeil's work contributes invaluable perspectives to the evolving landscape of bi-vocational ministry.[52] Beyond practical considerations, the theological reflections within the dissertation delve into the spiritual depth that emerges

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[48] Bruce G Allder, "Faithful Preparation for Ministry," in *A Plain Account of Christian Faithfulness: Essays in Honor of David B. McEwan*, ed. Rob A. Fringer and Dean G. Smith (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 184.

[49] Allder, "Faithful Preparation for Ministry," 184.

[50] Cory A. MacNeil, "The Effective Bi-vocational Pastor" (DMin., Liberty University, Lynchburg, 2020), 36.

[51] MacNeil, "The Effective Bi-vocational Pastor," 36.

[52] MacNeil, "The Effective Bi-vocational Pastor," 42.

when ministers engage with diverse professional contexts. By equipping pastors with practical strategies, the goal is to guide congregations toward becoming effective members, ministers, and missionaries, fostering a collective understanding of the vital role of discipleship in fulfilling their mission. This multifaceted exploration reaffirms the transformative potential of bi-vocationalism in addressing the complexities of contemporary ministry.

Beyond Financial Pragmatism

Within alternative ministry models, the financial challenges propelling the exploration of bi-vocationalism come under theological scrutiny. However, many theologians, including Diana Butler Bass, caution against reducing bi-vocationalism to a mere cost-saving measure.[53] The call for "sacred economics" emphasizes the value of ministry irrespective of financial compensation. This aligns with the theological concept of "vocation as calling," where ministry is a divinely ordained path not solely dependent on financial reward but rooted in a sacred understanding of service. As the landscape of church attendance and financial support transforms, theologians, including Stanley Hauerwas and N.T. Wright stresses the need for a holistic understanding of vocation that surpasses traditional ministry roles.[54] The evolving theological thought reflects the adaptive nature of the church, acknowledging the legitimacy of bi-vocational ministry as a response to economic challenges and cultural shifts.

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[53] Randy W. Goodson, "The Fully Vocational Minister: A New Way of Thinking about the Intentionally Bivocational Senior or Solo Pastor" (PhD diss., University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, 2018), 102.

[54] Paul Gardiner, "Learning to Think Together: Creativity, Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Epistemic Control," *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 38 (December 2020): 100749.

The religious narrative firmly establishes the value of labor as an essential component of humanity, with Paul's teachings encouraging a well-rounded approach to ministry. Autonomy and self-sufficiency challenge the expectation that congregations bear sole financial responsibility.[55] This approach fosters ministers and congregations to contemplate a more comprehensive understanding of their ministry, contributing positively to society and responsibly managing God's resources. Paul's actions, notably in Ephesus, serve as a powerful model for Christian virtues.[56] His dedication to arduous labor and selfless ministry exemplify diligence, selflessness, and servant leadership. Paul's commitment to sacrificial service over personal gain underscores a genuine concern for the well-being of others and a steadfast commitment to spreading the gospel. Paul's example of hard work and sacrificial service also carries implications for the perception of pastors and the church, particularly in the context of the unchurched generation. The embodiment of Christian virtues in ministry becomes a compelling narrative for shepherds and their flocks, encouraging a shared commitment to diligence, selflessness, and servant leadership in the service of God and neighbor.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the bi-vocational ministry study points out that Practical Theology is essential in shaping theological discourse and guiding ministry practices. Down the centuries, the bivocational aspect has been embedded in theological principles, indicating the intermittent relationship between religion and everyday complications. From the

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[55] Miller-McLemore, "Toward Greater Understanding of Practical Theology," 12.

[56] Stenschke, "Lifestyle and Leadership According to Paul's Statement of Account Before the Ephesian Elders in Acts 20: 17–35," 1.

tentmaking ventures of the apostle Paul to the work and prayer motif of the Benedictines, Practical Theology has acknowledged that all human activities contain within themselves some strand of the divine. In addition, the social and natural sciences are their solid strategic resource for the bivocational ministry's insights, making visible the cultural and economic phenomena behind all the pastoral routines. Addressing the challenge of disruption, theologians like Walter Brueggemann envision a prophetic renewal within the church, which debunks consumerism and instead proposes a more holistic manner of dealing with societal transformation.

Combining Practical Theology with bivocational ministry brings a flexible approach to contemporary ministry environments. It challenges ministers to walk the transformative talk of faith in their daily lives. It empowers them to take up the challenge of meeting the continually emerging needs of their congregations and communities. In response to the reality of a Church that is in a constant state of change and adapting to dynamic societal factors, the practical relevance of Practical Theology in sustaining effective and relevant ministry in the twenty-first century is a strong proposition. By adopting the bi-vocational strand of Practical Theology, pastors embody integrity, vision, and continuity; they are the church of the future today.

The notion of sacred economics, promoted by Diana Butler Bass, emphasizes the inherent worth of labor and discloses a spiritual dimension relevant to all kinds of work. Bivocational ministry emerges as the operationalization of theological principles on the current vicissitudes of ministry settings. By accepting the concept of sacred economics, bi-vocational pastors appreciate the value of all labor as a vocational gift from God to serve humanity. Amid a disjointed world characterized by societal divisions and economic gaps,

the bi-vocational pastor is a picture of solidarity and creativity, bringing to ministry a vision that is a blend of interdependent ministry and faith. The statements of their witness are an eloquent advocacy of the need to incorporate Practical Theology in theological education and pastoral formation. Practical Theology equips ministers to effectively handle the intricacies of modern-day ministry by providing the necessary skills and knowledge to allow ministers to be authentic in relating to the challenges and opportunities of bi-vocational ministry.

Bi-vocationalism calls us to rethink ministry as a rendered faith that goes beyond the one-string definition of ministry and accepts the infinite facets of human vocations. It summons us to acknowledge the transforming influence of God as manifest in every sphere of our being - from the pulpit to the world of commerce. With increasing shifts to a different social order, integrating Practical Theology with bi-vocational ministry provides a compelling blueprint to ensure laudable and relevant ministry as we beckon the new century and millennium. It calls upon us to embrace innovation, collaboration, and solidarity as we improve the ministry in the dignity of preaching the gospel.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

In ministry, pastoral leadership demands a nuanced and flexible approach, especially when faced with changes and financial uncertainty. The interdisciplinary foundation's paper examines the complex relationship between pastoral stability, bi-vocational ministry, and industrial relations through Adaptive Leadership Theory. As a discipline, industrial relations studies the complex connections between companies, workers, and governments in the workplace.[1] It began with labor movements during the Industrial Revolution due to terrible working conditions and exploitation.

Industrial relations have developed over time to consider multiple concepts of pluralism, unitarist, and Marxism as the society is transformed to make it diverse, and the free market has played a significant role in structural changes in the labor market.[2] It includes power relations and balancing of interests between different sectors. Employer-labor relations primarily consist of three phases: unionization, negotiations about working

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[1] Trevor Colling and Mike Terry, ed. "Work, The Employment Relationship and the Feld of Industrial Relations," in *Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice* (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 4-5.

[2] John W. Budd and Devasheesh Bhave, "Values, Ideologies, and Frames of Reference in Industrial Relations, in *The Sage Handbook of Industrial Relations*, ed. Paul Blyton, Nicolas Bacon, Jack Fiorito and Edmund Heery (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 93.

conditions, and various concerted activities for achieving common goals. Labor unions serve as voices for workers and aim to call for the employee's legitimate demands and rights. The grievance process and labor-management mediation help resolve workplace conflicts and build employment relationships. Industrial relations similarly highlight power issues and the various systematic flaws that arise from gross inequality, discrimination, and social unrest. These flaws affect not only the workplace environment but also employees' experiences.

Industrial relations will aid churches with financial volatility. Pastors and church leaders may handle financial concerns and promote shared decision-making with congregants through collective bargaining and conflict resolution. Understanding employee rights and power dynamics may help churches recruit fairly and distribute resources. Industrial relations enhance pastor-church leader-congregant relationships through transparency, accountability, and respect. Fairness and inclusiveness may help churches create a supporting community where everyone feels valued and encouraged to contribute to the mission. Leaders must integrate these principles into church governance, employment, and financial management via open communication, fair compensation, and a culture of collaboration and trust. Change resistance, cultural differences, and resource constraints may need careful planning and stakeholder input.

The focal premise of this study is that the bi-vocational structure of the ministry can provide not only the financial stability the ministry needs but also equip leaders and pastors with the skills they need to enable them to navigate the transition and uncertainty of the fiscal situation. This study considers and links pastoral leadership, bi-vocational ministers, and industrial relations through the Adaptive Leadership Theory. The theory

reflects a clear pathway to novel perspectives that allow me to discover a practical framework that will enable me to understand the prevailing pastoral instability amid the changing society. The goal is to discern the mind-blowing breakthroughs that assist in furthering ministry research and make the shepherd's work less tedious by providing them with purposeful plans and proficient ways to navigate the pressures of society and the workplace.

Industrial relations is a diverse field with a complex basis for bi-vocational ministry study. Despite seeming independent from religion, industrial relations offer a unique perspective on management-worker relationships in many workplaces. An industry includes employer-employee relationships and competing interests to complete society. Discovering secular leadership and collaboration is complex, leading to more illustrations of the worldwide labor force and pastoral leadership. Instead of church discussions, public debate will clarify the connection between social questions and religious issues. A multi-dimensional aspect of industrial relations constitutes a hypothesis that has been planned and thus affects pastoral stability.

I chose to explore the Adaptive Leadership Theory as the interdisciplinary framework for this research because of its relevance to pastors' current difficulties. Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky's pragmatic and flexible approach to business and leadership problem-solving sets it apart from other theories.[3] Its focus on adaptation resonates as pastoral ministry leaders transition from full-time to bi-vocational ministry. The Adaptive Leadership Theory helps pastors manage and flourish throughout changes

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[3] Joshua O Gale, "The Challenge of Change: A Qualitative Analysis of Pastors as Change Agents" (DMin diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2022), 3.

and financial uncertainty. Pastors may appreciate the intricacies of bi-vocational ministry and use a strategic and growth-oriented approach by following this philosophy. Thus, the theory becomes a practical instrument that empowers pastors to lead with resilience, adaptation, and development in the face of modern ministry's many obstacles.

The Doctor of Ministry project focuses on the pastor's unusual role in the current economic-sociological flow. Aware of pastors' main concerns, we combat them with a bi-vocational ministry structure. This study identifies the high risk of single-source income for pastors by providing a viable solution to the problem and an integral shift in the ministerial standard. The broad social perspective of industrial relations around the project is achieved when it becomes interdisciplinary. The research deals with managing the relationships between workers and managers, contrasting the management and labor controversies in secular employment to the church leader meritocracy.

The Adaptive Leadership Theory's adaptability and practical problem-solving support the complicated relationship between bi-vocational ministry and pastoral stability. The dynamic framework explores the project's biblical, theological, and historical roots. Flexible Leadership Theory encourages complex text analysis to uncover links between adaptable leadership principles and the biblical tale, improving our understanding of bi-vocational ministry's theological significance. The notion also explains religious leadership dynamics and adaptability. The Adaptive Leadership Theory uses history to explain pastoral obligations and religious adaptive leadership. This approach, aided by Adaptive Leadership Theory, improves the project's theoretical foundation and gives a complete knowledge of how adaptive tactics and leadership

dynamics uniquely interact in pastoral ministry, helping the DMin project succeed.

Adaptive Leadership Theory

Education, primarily in undergraduate liberal arts courses, particularly in the humanities and soft social sciences, was at the center of interdisciplinary work in the United States when the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS) began in 1979.[4] The primary difference between AIS and other organizations of a similar kind was whether multidisciplinary research should be conducted by professionals or by reformed disciplinarians and individuals with several talents. Subsequently, the main areas of interdisciplinary work and financial support have changed. The emphasis has shifted from teaching to research, from undergraduate to graduate education, from the humanities and soft social sciences to the natural sciences and medicine, from individual work to collaborative work, and from academia to practical applications. Despite this, more undergraduate transdisciplinary courses are offered currently than in the past. Instead of being made up of interdisciplinarians, interdisciplinary research teams are made up of open-minded mainstream disciplinarians.[5] Non-academics are also growing more and more prevalent, particularly outside the US. Transdisciplinary studies and the science of team science are two modern interdisciplinary endeavors that provide excellent illustrations of the issues with multidisciplinary philosophy and practice.

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[4] William H. Newell, "The State of the Field: Interdisciplinary Theory," *Issues In Interdisciplinary Studies* 31 (2013): 43, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101054.pdf.

[5] Lucas Rutting et al., *An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Research: Theory and Practice* Steph, ed. Menken and Machiel Keestra (Amsterdam, NL: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 11.

Interdisciplinary theories integrate ideas, methodologies, and insights from several domains to tackle complex problems.[6] Combining sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, biology, and other perspectives helps understand an issue. Interdisciplinary thinking holds that one area cannot fully comprehend or address many real-world problems. Interdisciplinary theory combines concepts from many domains to understand complicated phenomena. It encourages scholars to collaborate across fields to generate new ideas, approaches, and solutions. It acknowledges information interconnection and the necessity to combine diverse perspectives to find fresh insights and solutions to complex problems.

The Adaptive Leadership Theory, established by Ronald Heifetz and others, revolutionized leadership research. Adaptive Leadership combines the best of traditional management with new skills and perspectives to solve modern problems. Creative leadership is needed to overcome unprecedented challenges, including climate change, and to compete and collaborate in a global environment connected by shared interests, communications, and technology.[7] Organizations and societies also have successful adaptations. The first step to sustaining organizational change is acknowledging that most stakeholders accept the present status. Despite the chaos, individuals and systems create their ideal settings. More individuals fear loss than change. Change your approach to assessing and helping people cope with loss. Differentiate “adaptive” and “technical”

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[6] William H Newell, Jay Wentworth, and David Sebberson, “A Theory of Interdisciplinary Studies,” *Issues in Integrative Studies* no. 19 (2001): 4.

[7] Ronald Abadian Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Brighton, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 3.

issues. Integrating two firms' technology after a merger is technical, but recognizing and implementing culture and value alliances is adaptive.

This idea holds that leadership is about organizing collaborative efforts to solve adaptive challenges—complex issues without obvious answers. The Adaptive Leadership Theory emphasizes differentiating between technical difficulties with known answers and adaptive challenges that demand creative and adaptable solutions.[8] Adaptive Leadership Theory views leaders as change facilitators, not issue solutions. The first principle acknowledges the necessity for adaptability and that regular techniques may not work. Leaders must establish a space for change, discomfort, and adaptive problem-solving. The second premise emphasizes communal intelligence. Adaptive leaders promote open debate, variety of thinking, and inclusion of many viewpoints to comprehend difficulties and possible solutions. Thus, the theory sees leadership as a communal, adaptive process best suited for complex problems. It emphasizes analyzing adaptive difficulties, avoiding hasty solutions, and organizing group action. This paradigm criticizes hierarchical leadership and promotes dispersed and participatory leadership.

Church is an ideal space to implement the Adaptive Leadership Theory. Congregations should be open to demographic changes: they should be ready to admit to several streams, such as culture and finance. In contrast to leaders who dispense the answers, adaptive church leaders facilitate deliberative and participatory interventions.[9] It entails extending the theological study, weighing on the biblical discourse, and the

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[8] Tenneisha Nelson and Vicki Squires, "Addressing complex challenges through adaptive leadership: A Promising Approach to Collaborative Problem-Solving," *Journal of Leadership Education* 16, no. 4 (2017): 112.

[9] Darren Swanson et al., "Seven Tools for Creating Adaptive Policies," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 77, no. 6 (2010): 924.

congregation's problem-working with the current issues. The adapting leaders are eager to note that those factors responsible for the adaptive complexity in the ministries are often the kind of assumptions, ideas, and views that can neither be accessed nor imposed from the top. They are based on a group approach to delineating and solving the questions facing the whole community. In this manner, the method moves the church into shared accountability and reciprocity for improving the church, in which the Christian community collaborates.

On the one hand, the Adaptive Leadership Theory underscores the handling of the always-there conflicts of adaptive transformation. Church administrators ought to, with their changing congregational and community needs, couple the principles and traditions of the past with the future ones. Adaptive Leadership Theory stands at the lofty altitudes of the leading theoretically practical approaches to problem-solving in the highly adaptive and dynamic church environment.[10] The followers of this theoretical approach would not only be able to overcome existing challenges holistically but also walk the congregation through the transformative processes with compassion, wisdom, and communal engagement.

Adaptive Leadership Theory addresses the core challenge — bi-vocational ministry. Bi-vocational ministry involves performing various pastoral tasks while operating on more than one financial income structure.[11] Leaders enable adjustments to this situation. The vision centers primarily on the technical elements of the ministry,

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[10] Karen Leanne Bennetts, "The Montessori Leader" (PhD diss., Monash University, 2018), 38, https://scholar.archive.org/work/wxxzhzhjxbdyloqq45x672mj5y/access/wayback/https://au-east.erc.monash.edu.au/fpfiles/16379174/5885293_PhDThesisKBennettsFINAL.pdf.

[11] Gregory Harris Smith, "Effective Strategies for Bi-vocational Ministry" (DMin., Biola University, 2014), 3.

stating that serving in a bi-vocational ministry capacity should be viewed through a different lens when compared with a wholly funded ministry. The Adaptive Leadership Theory has it that in the pastoral ministry, change must be adapted. Leaders comprehend that just being a full-time minister might not be feasible in overcoming the problems of financial insecurity in changing culture and its expectations. The notion resonates with the cluster of visionaries and their congregations who learn in the process.

The ideology encourages collective work, reflecting the church's unity. Leaders who adapt to bi-vocational ministry promote congregation-wide discussions on pastoral responsibility and financial diversification. This model also includes the entire community in decision-making, creating a sense of shared responsibility and commitment to bi-vocational ministry adaptations.

The Adaptive Leadership Theory helps with transitions and financial stability in bi-vocational ministry.[12] Transitioning from full-time ministry to a bi-vocational model or within the changing church community is an adaptive difficulty. The approach helps leaders manage these transformations by fostering continuous learning and adaptation. Adaptive leaders use this theoretical framework to develop congregational resilience throughout changes. They know that change needs teamwork and acceptance of uncertainty. Adaptive Leadership Theory means influencing a congregation to become dynamically and separately adaptive/ flexible, which perceives the opportunity that change brings and uses it to grow.[13] The theory of economic policy resists financial

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[12] George Hendricks and Kelli Taylor, "A Fresh Expression of 'And Are We Yet Alive?'" *The Asbury Journal* 74, no. 1 (2019): 4.

[13] Zach Ellis, "Shared Leadership in Congregations: How to Construct a Holding Environment to Do Adaptive Work," *Discernment: Theology and the Practice of Ministry* 3, no. 2 (2017): 1.

distress/turbulence with practical solutions. The church has taken the time to listen to concerns about diverse financial issues and has given creative solutions. This approach enables bi-vocational ministry leaders to resort to and practice business techniques that can earn them income outside the church. The strategy may involve training pastors for different careers or high-level organizational strategists among the congregation.

Engagement with Biblical Foundations

Several biblical themes and narratives align with Adaptive Leadership Theory and Industrial Relations. The Bible provides several instances of adaptive leaders, such as Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt and Jesus traversing various social and political environments throughout his mission.[14] Biblical teachings on perseverance, wisdom, and servant leadership correlate with adaptive leadership, which entails overcoming problems and promoting change. Jesus' humility and service model adaptive leadership teachings encourage leaders to recognize their followers' needs and change their ways. Biblical fairness, justice, and compassion are evident in Industrial Relations. The Bible advocates for fair treatment and pay of workers and the dignity of labor. The parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) emphasizes labor justice and honesty. Biblical reconciliation and conflict resolution explain how to resolve workplace conflicts and build harmony. Biblical stewardship stresses employers' duty to care for workers and provide good working conditions. Thus, Adaptive Leadership Theory and Industrial

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[14] Whitney Caroline Muller, "'Issi My Kindt Nie': An Ideological Student of Matthew 2:16-18," (master's thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2023), 52.

Relations may use biblical principles to enhance ethical leadership, fairness, and workplace harmony.

Biblical leadership and present organizational settings benefit from Acts 20:34 and Industrial interactions' complicated management-worker interactions theories. Paul oversees Ephesus and works with his hands as a spiritual leader. This dual role reflects industrial relations' challenges and underlines the need for balanced and reciprocal leadership-follower connections. The dual-role illustration shows how the Bible teaches leadership via spiritual education and practical interaction. The Industrial Relations viewpoint emphasizes respect and collaboration between spiritual and secular leaders and followers. The biblical story illustrates leadership dynamics beyond its historical setting.

This interdisciplinary research reveals that biblical principles persist and may affect current leadership, employment, and financial difficulties. Through Paul's actions and lessons, his exemplary leadership principles matched modern leadership theories and organizational dynamics. This uncovering of the possible background for this biblical story gives insight for modern leaders faced with the challenging task of dealing with their monetary problems and complicated interrelationships with their local faith community. The biblical interpretation of Acts 20:34 is ideal for Christian financial standards. Finally, he concludes, evidently convinced of his claims, which are equally evident to those present, "It would be hard to argue against the fact that my hands have supplied not only my own needs and the needs of my companions."[15] The statement

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[15] A.N.Y. Kumi-Larbi, "Living a Life of Integrity as a Christian," in *The Church of Pentecost*, 64, https://thecophq.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2020-Theme-Expositions-1-1.pdf#page=66.

supports the adaptive leadership theory, biblical personal responsibility, and hard work. According to the Bible, spiritual leaders like Paul help their communities and themselves.

In the Bible, Paul's understanding of the Ephesian elders' economic struggles shows that he provides spiritual direction and handles his community's real-world issues. This foresight fits with adaptive leadership theory, which stresses anticipating and overcoming difficulties in real time. Paul's approach embodies the adaptive leader's dedication to handling uncertainty and giving practical answers, transcending time and addressing modern leaders' concerns. Financial stability, biblical teachings, adaptive leadership theory, and industrial relations principles are examined to understand the subject better. It shows how biblical concepts may be applied to modern leadership and finance. The biblical worldview emphasizes personal responsibility and the need for leaders to be flexible and involved in community economic issues. The biblical basis provides timeless counsel for pastoral leaders seeking financial security in the complex terrain of pastoral leadership.

Engagement with the Historical Foundations

In the eighteenth century, highly talented and famous preachers often led creative congregations, carrying forward the Congregational tradition. Johann Leonhard Dober was amazed at the low regard of eighteenth-century Congregationalists compared to their seventeenth-century counterparts. They are the ones who configure their messages according to people's interests. However, the change in traditional funding significantly affects this undertaking. Today, a contemporary church is confronting as many old challenges as new issues, like young adults rebelling against authority or increasing the

unchurched, which also hurt a pastor's earnings.[16] Rather than working the old financial mechanism, it must change to match church needs in this challenging period.

The matters concerning the financial discipline of the 18th-century Johann Leonhard Dober are a clear image of a pastor facing funding challenges. As the story goes, Dober's trip to the West Indies depicts his fusion of cultures and the directive he so desperately aspires for the marginal groups. Dober suggests that humans should love others and make offerings for such care as physical and spiritual needs. He agrees to a reassignment, which may seem so critical that only a God with a universal vision could be able to facilitate such ministries. His willingness to serve in places of uncertainty reflects a character involving an all-encompassing ministry-focused approach and not just the role of a pastor.

Different styles of the forty pastoral leaders show the contemporary ways of the pastoral financial model. Nowadays, pastors are advancing the bi-vocational ministry revenue model to continue losing their reliance on the congregation. The sustainability of pastoral leadership must be re-considered because of financial issues in the church sector and prevailing social characteristics. The Adaptive Leadership Program reshaped the foundation of pastoral leadership and revealed the history of financial models.[17] Past pastors had one main problem to deal with in the past, but with increasing complexity, adaptive leadership helps them adapt. In Acts 20:34, Paul insisted on the independent attitude that one should have towards life matters and assisting the poor and needy. As

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[16] David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church ... and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 11.

[17] Rob Elkington, Darryl Meekins, and Jennifer M. Breen, "Leadership as an Enabling Function: Towards a New Paradigm for Local Church Leadership in the 21st Century," *In die Skriflig* 49, no. 3 (2015): 8.

with all adaptive leadership strategies, these concepts facilitate a practical solution to solving those complex problems linked to the situation.

Paul's idea of self-sufficiency reflects the leader's adaptability, which implies his strategy towards addressing and solving the latter. The Bible mentions adaptability as (spiritual guidance, dedication) and (independence) in the manager's role, highlighting the importance of the leader-follower double bond for an adaptive leader who is a conscientious and responsible leader. This multidisciplinary demonstration reveals the plausibility and practicality of biblical principles in modern-day leadership. The case of Johann Leonhard Dober, an eighteenth-century missionary with a less rigid leadership approach, is an example. The visionary mission in the West Indies required the acting manager to have the habits to match any cultural barrier while paying close attention to the population's requirements. Adaptive leaders like Dober survived, heading towards the unknown, considering all the obstacles.

In the twenty first century, pastors are combating both financial challenges and shifting diversity, so more vibrant leaders who are adaptable are needed. The pulpit must be flexible to the members' needs so that leaders can remain securely positioned. The pastor's current role often involves adaptive leadership, which can be achieved by encouraging people, trying out new approaches, and promoting the consumption of services. With that in mind, the foundation of pastoral financial models can be drawn from the adaptive leadership perspective, which illustrates a dynamic leader-and-follower interaction. Flexibility, proactiveness in problem-solving, and an equal functioning leader-follower link are the characteristics of a pastoral leader.

Engagement with Theological Foundations

The practical theology of bivocational ministry comes down to Paul's commitment to spiritual, interpersonal, and meaningful relationships. It also points to financial stability as one of the critical things necessary to succeed in ministry. Theology must be the center and underlying principle of sermons, relationships, and decisions to build a sound doctrine in ministry. The bivocational ministry structure aligns with theological thinking about love, life in Christ, and obedience.

Through the adaptive leadership theory, emphasis on change and the more intricate side of things shaped bi-vocational ministry theology. According to Ronald Heifetz and Martin Linsky, leaders must be versatile and highly innovative when situations change. Adaptive leadership theory encourages bi-vocational ministers to make a theological praxis, which can help their faith consist of their demands to do more occupations.[18] Critical, introduced by Karl Marx and Paulo Freire, is undoubtedly a pillar of this synthesis. Praxis, a term coined as the connection between thinking and doing, highlights the functional nature of theological dialogue with the realities of life. With that continuous exchange, this participation merges in the bi-vocational ministry structure because leaders must adhere to their spiritual and secular duties. Leadership develops by keeping the theology of the church tied to the changing economic, cultural, and social variables in the life of the church and its people.

The ideas of hermeneutics, contextual, and narrative Christology add to integrating adaptive leadership theology with bi-vocational ministering. Leaders achieve

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[18] Jay Kim, "To Walk by the Spirit, You Need Adaptive Capacity," The Gospel Coalition, August 16, 2022, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/adaptive-capacity/.

interpretation of religious texts, dialogues, and tradition, engaging with modern life, using this to benefit the church's financial stability, and changing the dynamics of the framework of the adaptive leadership theory ensures that management can overcome these difficulties. Contextualized leaders keep theological principles alive by exploring and applying the church. Contextual theology keeps theological principles alive by exploring them and applying them to the church, thus guarding against bivocational ministers and their churches getting theological solutions that neglect the reality of their cultures and present predicaments.

Scientific Model-Integration model

Integration is the method we are using to facilitate our interdisciplinary work, which is based on differentiated relationality.[19] The integrated scientific model understands the bi-vocational structure of ministry as a constantly changing and interdependent system used through systems theory. With the utilization of this method, religious leaders' proclivity towards leadership dynamics, economic considerations, and community links would be the subject of college studies. Systems theory discloses intra-connectedness and feedback systems that may affect the positive or negative response toward adaptive leadership theory during a financial crisis.

Integrated research allows Adaptive Leadership Theory to be applied repeatedly and interactively to include, but not limited to, financially strained pastors in need of

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[19] Steven J. Sandage and F. LeRon Shults, "Relational Spirituality and Transformation: A Relational Integration Model," *Journal of Psychology & Christianity* 26, no. 3 (2007): 262, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Steven-Sandage/publication/232588548_Relational_spirituality_and_transformation_A_relational_integration_model/links/56630e3a08ae15e7463134d7/Relational-spirituality-and-transformation-A-relational-integration-model.pdf.

strategy identification, planning, and execution. It ensures that bi-vocational pastors shift needs while addressing challenges via cycles of reflection and action. The integrated approach captures pastors' subjective experiences, views, and attitudes via qualitative analysis.[20] Document content analysis, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews will indicate how adaptive leadership theory is seen, accepted, and utilized. Pastors' qualitative experiences illustrate financial stress's complexity and the theory's value. A complete DMin project evaluation is needed to determine how Adaptive Leadership Theory affects thinking across research fields. In the project, the integrated model shows how pastors' leadership changes affect finances. Systemic behavioral changes, leadership, and economic resilience are examined.

Adaptive Leadership Theory's biblical, theological, and historical ramifications matter in the integrated scientific model. This approach lets us examine how the theory matches biblical principles, creates theological foundations, and shapes ministry organizations. Adaptive leadership theory is assessed using biblical principles. The integrated model digs into the theory's coherence with biblical tales, exploring how leadership adaptations affect biblical characters facing challenges and transitions. The study bases Adaptive Leadership Theory on biblical principles to increase its relevance and validity.

The role and influence of the adaptive leadership theory in bi-vocational ministry can be assessed using the integrated scientific model. This concerns how it drives the agreement of a ministry, the leadership, and the theological financially based

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[20] GP Harianto, Rusijono Rusijono, Siti Masitoh, and W H Setyawan, "Collaborative-Cooperative Learning Model to Improve Theology Students' Characters: Is It Effective?," *Cakrawala Pendidikan* 39, no. 2 (2020): 411.

responses. The intricate features of the religious perspective on leadership, guardianship, and financial steadiness are explored in detail. The integrated model examines theological issues to enhance the theological basis for the DMin project, thus formulating a firm foundation on which one can build a theory-theology stance.

Adaptive Leadership Theory has an influential association with the infrastructure redesign of the integrated model. Our ministry has also evolved due to communal, cultural, and economic development trends, which have affected our congregation's practices and structure. It highlights adaptive leadership theory's approaches to leader's issues related to managing transitions and problems. History provides a basis for developing generalizations, trends, or lessons associated with a bi-vocational ministry theory. The model flows into the DMin project, connecting various subject domains. It is a dynamic force that reinforces research and a theoretical framework for the project challenge. This comprehensive methodology assures that the implications and implementations of the Adaptive Leadership Theory are biblical, deepen theological underpinnings, and evolve the ministry structure. The DMin project is strengthened by this extensive study on Adaptive Leadership Theory's potential transformation to a bi-vocational ministry structure.

Conclusion

Due to multidisciplinary research, Adaptive Leadership Theory and industrial relations are widespread in organizational practice. During the project challenge, the theory's practical uses in remedying the financial stress of functioning in a full-time vocational ministry are seen. Philosophers may often deal with economic problems in a

judicial way, and is their steady and flexible nature the same thing? A science-integrated grounds theory model used throughout the study has provided holistic knowledge of different systems and how the theory enters action research cycles and adjusts within the adaptation to various cycles of both quantitative and qualitative aspects of leadership for financial resilience.

The integrative essay explains that adaptive leadership and the Bible teachings have convergent views and ideas. Adoption, persistence, maintenance, and self-governance characterize this theory and are reflected in the scriptures, enhancing theological interpretations. It also supports understanding practice management amongst the faith communities/leaders. An opportunistic approach that leads to applying theory to my historical foundations closely identifies adaptive leaders who recognize their strategies. This past perspective empowers the specification of the current implementation of adaptive leadership principles and underlines the timelessness of adaptive leadership principles' place of origin.

Reemphasizing the role of Adaptive Leadership Theory in interpreting and tackling the DMin project will be indispensable. The concept is so effective and can be used in different ways, which gives bi-vocational ministry opportunities and opportunities to operate it in various ways. Leadership in the transition period, action research for long-term development, and the integration of qualitative findings can have a propulsive influence on this ministry in financial matters.

When the Adaptive Management Theory is interrelated with the scientific model, its problem pattern and the DMin project's stability may be altered. This further

strengthens the validity of the theory that the project steps should follow and explains the combination of issues into practical, theological, and historical aspects.

Observing base learning outcomes, an introspection over their effect on the individual's doctoral project is undertaken. Multidisciplinary travel has allowed me to create new routes, embracing a new, comprehensive, and integrated strategy. The idea of the research paper applies as well to prove the linkage between the project components. The biblical, theological, and historical origins and reasons for survival are interwoven and help churches to stand steadfast and adjust. The reflection should consider ways to transform the pastor's vision and actions. The exercised theory makes pastors aware of their financial challenges and the need to develop a more flexible and creative leadership style for the modern ministry context. A scientific integrated model is successful in the intellectual mastery that lets individuals dig deep into the connection between disciplines, building the community that helps gain such aspects. Finally, the multidisciplinary inquiry is anchored by the Adaptive Leadership Theory with an integrated scientific model that provides profound knowledge of how the theory brings change to the DMin project. Scientific research should be considered the common language among the experts, allowing participants to check and interpret the outcomes of emerging interventions and adopt the most beneficial approaches in the bio-vocational ministry's multifaceted landscape.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

Upon entering this program, I had intentions on pursuing doctoral work with a different focus. After my mentors heard my heart leap from my early literary assignments, I was advised bivocationalism would be an ideal path to explore. In addition, considering my current context of ministry it was confirmation. Five years ago, I was called to pastor a small, rural church in Slaughter, Louisiana. Slaughter is 20 miles from Baton Rouge, Louisiana's state capital. Considering the town's population and demographics it was apparent to me that the possibly would be that I would never be able to receive a living wage from this congregation. Certainly, our church provides in love and affection for my family and I what we realize they would never be able to accomplish monetary. But love and affection do not pay the bills. Therefore, although I desired a bivocational ministry it was apparent to me that it was a necessity at this pastorate. So, my doctoral work is not an experimental theory, but rather it is my lived practicum. This thesis introduces a practical intervention aimed at addressing a pressing but often overlooked issue in pastoral ministry: financial stress. Many pastors, particularly in small or under-resourced congregations, experience economic pressure that undermines their effectiveness, stability, and long-term sustainability in ministry. These financial challenges are typically beyond the scope of traditional theological training. In response,

this project proposes a structured financial boot camp tailored specifically for pastors. The boot camp combines financial education, conflict resolution strategies, and vocational development, offering a holistic approach to financial resilience and well-being in ministry.

The project was designed as a small cohort-based pilot involving 10 pastors from various ministry settings. Participants were recruited through social media outreach, email invitations, and via text messaging. Their participation was central to the project's success, as they bring real-world concerns and lived experiences that will shape the dialogue and learning environment. By sharing their financial and ministerial struggles openly, the group fostered mutual support and collaborative problem-solving. The diversity of the cohort, spanning denominations, church sizes, and regional backgrounds, ensured that the boot camp addressed a broad range of challenges and provides insights that transcend a single ministry context.

Methodology

According to American psychologist, there are categories (levels) of needs. The two lower levels are safety and security, and physiological needs. On these two levels the followings needs are listed: health, employment, property, family, food, water, shelter, clothing. Bivocationalism is the remedy for pastors to have heightened stability for many of these needs. My approach was a bivocational bootcamp for pastors. This virtual project fits the identified gap by enlightening pastors on the benefits of multiple sources of income to help them become financially stable. Considering that pastors often have a busy schedule; I felt a virtual setting would suit participants best.

Dr. Ira Antoine of Houston, Texas, was the key presenter. He is pastor of Minnehulla Baptist Church in Goliad and director of Bivocational Pastors with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He has a Doctor of Philosophy Applied Theology from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently bivocational.

My professional associates, who were also panelists, and their credentials were Dr. Mary W. Moss of Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Dr. Perry Jones of Clinton, Louisiana. Dr. Moss is the pastor of St. Alma Baptist Church in Lakeland, Louisiana. She has a Doctor of Ministry from Beeson School of Divinity-Samford University. Dr. Moss was bivocational before retirement. Dr. Jones leads Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Zachary, Louisiana. He has a Doctor of Ministry from Clamp Divinity-Anderson University. He is bivocational.

I chose to use the Qualitative analysis method to collect data. Each participant received pre- and post-project questionnaires. Questions included:

1.How do you define bivocationalism?

2. Do you believe that your compensation from your ministry is sufficient to prepare you for retirement?

3. Do you believe bivocationalism enhances or diminishes the effectiveness of a pastor's ministry?

4. When you assess the current landscape of the church (low church attendance), and the economic climate (drastic inflation), do you view bivocationlism as a remedy?

5. If you are currently bivocational, do you view your vocational within the marketplace as a sect of your overall ministry?

The surveys were created utilizing Jot Forms to allow participants access to record and submit their answers directly in the document. Participants submitted the Pre-Project Survey before the start of the first session. Via the consent form, participants granted the researcher permission to record the sessions to review sessions for data collection.

In addition to the pre and post surveys, individual interviews and journaling were utilized. The pre and post survey was chosen because it provided a clear gauge of the participants' initial understanding of the topic and any increased awareness of bivocationalism. The individual interviews allowed the researcher to have a personal and specific approach with the participant.

Curriculum and Structure:

The Bivocational Blueprint Bootcamp presented a strategic and theological framework for reimagining pastoral ministry through the lens of bivocationalism. Its central hypothesis is that pastors who embrace a bivocational structure — balancing ministry responsibilities with marketplace employment — will be better positioned to navigate the increasing costs of living, transitional moments, and internal church conflicts. The project was segmented by topics: "The Bivocational Pastor," "Planning for Tomorrow," and "Congregational Conflict." These topics were critical to understanding, embracing, and implementing a bivocational ministry.

The first session, "The Bivocational Pastor," established the theological and conceptual basis for bivocational ministry. This session opened with prayer and the reading of Acts 20:34. It was followed by personal introductions and a group discussion, encouraging panelists to each define bivocationalism. The conversation highlighted the varied expressions of bivocational life, emphasizing that it is not a monolithic model but rather a flexible approach that adapts to different ministry context. Bivocationlism, is often thought to include only blue-collar marketplace work; however, it is broader. I shared that pastors who are politicians, authors, psalmists, and investors are considered

bivocational. Dr. Mary Moss shared her unique bivocational ministry structure. Previously, she was pastoring as well as maintaining a staff position at her home church. Personally, I witnessed how not being bivocational affected my grandfather when Hurricane Katrina forced our family to evacuate from the Greater New Orleans area and shelter in Little Rock, Arkansas. His pastoral duties stopped while he was away from his church living in his hotel room. However, my uncle, who is also a pastor, was able to continue with a full ministerial itinerary because he not only was a pastor, but he was also an evangelist, which allowed him to continue ministry and receive income. As bivocational ministers, both Moss and my uncle are images of Paul's statements in Ephesians 4:11 where he suggests pastor and evangelist are two separate callings or vocations.

Contrary to the misconception that bivocationalism signals a diminished spiritual calling, the session asserted that it is a legitimate and historically grounded practice. The point was lifted that often fully funded/fulltime ministries are frequently viewed with more prestige. Participants were reminded that the Apostle Paul maintained a trade while engaging in full-time ministry, demonstrating that work in the marketplace and spiritual leadership are not mutually exclusive. The bivocational pastor, therefore, is not a lesser version of a full-time minister, but rather one who draws on a broader range of experiences to inform their pastoral engagement. Balance, boundaries, and burdens as the three Bs of bivocational pastoring were discussed in detail. The session also explored the practical benefits of marketplace employment, including increased empathy for congregants' everyday challenges, opportunities for community engagement beyond church walls, and access to secular networks that can facilitate evangelism. Also, Dr.

Jones and Moss, during the discussion, asked the researcher “Is bivocationlism and indication that I do not fully trust God?” My answer was without reservation, “No!” I continued, “It is evidence that I trust God with all that He has deposited in me.” The business acumen, ideas, and strategies that God has given me should not be forfeited to function in my spiritual vocation but rather can function congruently without failure.” Finally, the discussion addresses the practicalities of transitioning from a traditional full-time ministry role to a bivocational one, highlighting the importance of intentionality, balance, and vocational alignment.

The second session, “Planning for Tomorrow,” shifted focus to the financial realities and long-term sustainability of pastoral life. Using Ecclesiastes 3:1 as a scriptural anchor, this portion of the workshop underscored the inevitability of change, seasons of growth and decline, vitality and illness, life and death. Participants were reminded that these fluctuations affect church membership, giving patterns, and, by extension, pastoral compensation. The idea that many times revivals and itinerant engagements can experience a lull was discussed. Also, there will be times when illness may occur. One of the session’s most pressing concerns is the widespread lack of retirement planning among pastors. Citing data indicating that 37% of pastors do not have a retirement account and 59% know a colleague in the same position, the session advocated for immediate and structured financial planning. Bivocational income, it is argued, should not be treated as merely supplementary but as an opportunity to build longterm financial security. Pastors are encouraged to use their marketplace earnings to establish retirement funds, emergency savings, and investment portfolios. The workshop recommended trusted financial institutions such as Edward Jones, MMBB, and New

York Life for assistance in setting up structured plans. Additionally, the session stressed that many churches, particularly in economically constrained contexts, cannot afford to fully support a pastor's livelihood. Bivocationalism, therefore, is not only a financial necessity but also a means of relieving churches from unsustainable financial obligations. Participants were also advised to steward ministry-related gifts wisely by placing them in interest-bearing accounts or trusts. In doing so, pastors can maximize financial resources and protect their economic futures. At this point in the session a financial investment slideshow, which was created by the context associate, was presented. This slideshow displayed scenarios of potential growth when funds are placed in investment accounts. The session promoted a shift in mindset from reactive crisis management to proactive financial stewardship.

The final session, "Congregational Conflict," addressed the relational and organizational challenges that often emerge within the life of the church. Drawing from Hebrews 12:14, the session emphasized the pursuit of peace and the necessity of direct engagement when conflict arises. The discussion began with a frank acknowledgment that pastoral stability is often threatened by church disputes. Declining membership and financial support frequently correlate with internal conflict, and these dynamics can directly impact a pastor's compensation and emotional wellbeing. This session emphasized a proactive approach to conflict management, warning against the tendency to delay difficult conversations. Participants were urged to address issues swiftly and decisively to minimize the long-term damage to the congregation and pastoral office. A key theme in this session was the insufficiency of prayer alone in resolving complex interpersonal and institutional problems. While prayer is acknowledged as essential, the

session stressed that it must be accompanied by concrete action and strategic leadership. Echoing the scriptural principle that "faith without works is dead," pastors are encouraged to complement spiritual practices with administrative and relational interventions. Furthermore, the session highlighted the value of reasoned dialogue in conflict resolution. When handled with maturity and grace, reasoning together can foster mutual understanding and pave the way for healing and restoration within the church body.

Summary Of Learning

Bivocational ministry is an increasingly prevalent reality for pastors. This study provided an in-depth analysis of participant responses from a Pre-Workshop Questionnaire aimed at understanding the lived experiences of bivocational pastors. By analyzing these responses, the study sought to gain insight into the multifaceted dimensions of bivocational ministry, particularly in terms of financial stability, ministerial effectiveness, economic considerations, and the integration of secular employment with spiritual callings. The primary objectives of this research were to define bivocationalism from different perspectives, assess the financial sustainability of bivocational clergy, evaluate its impact on pastoral efficacy, examine its role in addressing economic and attendance-related challenges in churches, and investigate the extent to which secular employment aligns with ministerial responsibilities.

The survey included five open-ended questions that allowed respondents to provide detailed information regarding their experiences and perceptions. The results of this analysis contributed to a broader understanding of the challenges and benefits of

bivocational ministry, offering recommendations for sustainable compensation models, structured financial planning, and strategic integration of secular work into ministry. Participant responses indicated diverse interpretations of bivocationalism, with definitions generally falling into three primary categories. Some respondents emphasized the necessity of balancing secular employment alongside ministry, highlighting the dual nature of their responsibilities. Others defined bivocationalism as a financial necessity imposed by inadequate church compensation. Meanwhile, some viewed bivocationalism as vocational duality, distinguishing between their spiritual and secular duties. While some pastors perceived bivocationalism as an enriching and practical approach, others regarded it as an impediment to full ministerial devotion. A prevailing sentiment among respondents suggested that bivocationalism is primarily a financial necessity rather than a voluntary choice. This perception underscored the broader structural and economic challenges that churches and pastors face.

Financial insecurity in full-time pastoral ministry is a significant concern among respondents. Many churches do not provide structured financial planning or retirement benefits for pastors, leading to long-term financial instability. Respondents frequently highlighted that income from secular employment is essential for sustaining their economic security and providing for their families. Additionally, several pastors reported that receiving non-fixed salaries or irregular offerings does not sufficiently meet financial needs. These findings emphasized the need for sustainable financial models, as many pastors do not receive adequate compensation to ensure long-term financial security. Consequently, engaging in secular work becomes a necessary adaptation rather than an optional career choice.

A central theme in the responses concerned the debate on whether bivocationalism enhances or diminishes pastoral effectiveness. Proponents argued that secular employment provides pastors with firsthand experience, enabling them to relate more effectively to congregants, and that exposure to workplace challenges allows pastors to incorporate real-world issues into their sermons and pastoral care. Conversely, some respondents believed that dividing time between secular employment and ministry results in decreased focus and availability, limiting pastoral leadership. The physical and emotional toll of juggling multiple responsibilities can negatively impact pastoral care and administrative efficiency. However, some participants maintained that successful bivocational ministry depends on time management and discipline, with pastors who effectively structure their schedules arguing that bivocationalism does not necessarily diminish ministerial effectiveness. This divide underscored the complex interaction between financial necessity and pastoral dedication.

While some pastors thrive in a bivocational model, others struggle to balance their responsibilities effectively. The questionnaire also explored whether bivocationalism is an effective solution to economic challenges and declining church attendance. Many pastors acknowledged that bivocationalism enables churches with limited budgets to sustain pastoral leadership and allows churches to allocate financial resources more efficiently, supporting operational stability. However, some respondents argued that financial sustainability alone does not resolve the issue of declining church attendance, emphasizing that effective ministry requires dedicated leadership and active community engagement, which may be compromised when pastors are stretched too thin. Responses suggested that the success of bivocationalism depends on the specific church context and

the pastor's personal circumstances. While bivocationalism may work well in smaller congregations, larger churches often require full-time pastoral leadership. Although bivocationalism is recognized as a viable financial model, it is not universally embraced as a strategic solution to declining church membership.

The final section of the questionnaire examined whether pastors consider their secular vocations as an extension of their ministry. Three primary viewpoints emerge. Some pastors in fields such as education, social justice, and healthcare saw their secular jobs as opportunities for evangelism, mentorship, and community outreach. Other respondents maintained a strict division between their secular employment and pastoral duties, viewing their jobs solely as financial support mechanisms. Meanwhile, some pastors described integrating faith into their secular work, even if their employment is not explicitly ministry related. These perspectives illustrated the personalized nature of bivocational ministry, where some pastors seamlessly incorporate faith at work while others maintained a clear distinction between their professional and ministerial roles.

Several major findings and recommendations emerged from this study. Financial stability remains a major concern, necessitating that churches explore alternative compensation models such as retirement funds and endowments to provide financial security for pastors. Ministerial effectiveness depends on context, with effective time management and delegation of pastoral duties being critical to balancing bivocational responsibilities.

While bivocationalism can sustain churches financially, it does not inherently address church attendance decline, suggesting that churches must consider engagement

strategies beyond financial sustainability. Professional development and support are needed, including training programs that equip pastors with financial literacy skills for long-term economic planning and networks that foster knowledge-sharing and mutual support among bivocational pastors.

The Pre-Workshop Questionnaire findings revealed that bivocationalism is a complex yet necessary reality for many pastors. While it offers financial benefits, it also presents challenges in ministerial focus and effectiveness. The success of bivocational ministry depends on individual context, workload management, and available support systems. Faith communities must reconsider compensation models, provide financial planning resources, and develop sustainable strategies for pastoral effectiveness.

Bivocationalism should not merely be seen as a fiscal imperative but as an intentional model that supports pastors both spiritually and financially. This study served as a foundation for continued discussions on sustainable bivocational ministry models, emphasizing holistic pastoral support encompassing both spiritual and financial well-being.

Comprehensive Analysis of Pre- and Post-Surveys

The goal of the pre- and post-surveys was to identify shifts in participants and perspectives following the workshop and assess how their understanding, beliefs, and attitudes evolved. The questionnaire covered five key areas: the definition of bivocationalism, compensation and retirement concerns, ministry effectiveness, economic and church attendance considerations, and the role of marketplace vocations in ministry.

Question 1 asked participants to define bivocationalism? Before the workshop, participants generally defined bivocationalism as the act of balancing a ministerial calling with a secular job. Many viewed it as a necessity rather than a choice, particularly in response to financial constraints. Some responses emphasized the challenge of managing two roles, while others saw it as a way to engage more with their communities. Following the workshop, some responses showed participants refined their understanding of bivocationalism. For example, many continued to acknowledge bivocationalism as a financial necessity, others framed it as a strategic choice that allows pastors to extend their reach beyond the church walls. There was a notable shift toward viewing bivocationalism as a means of integrating ministry into daily life rather than as a burden.

The workshop appeared to contribute to a broader understanding of bivocationalism, with participants recognizing its potential beyond mere financial necessity. For example, Participant X in a pre-workshop questionnaire stated, bivocationalism indicates "A pastor who is paid and compensated by the church but also works a secular job which would also serve as a primary or secondary stream of income." Participant X stated in the post-workshop questionnaire, "Bivocationalism means having mutual streams of income, reducing a Pastor's reliance solely on the Church for provisions. It is not a sign of weakness or being lesser than anyone; it is a prudent approach to ensuring one's financial stability in the short and long term." The shift suggests an increased appreciation of bivocationalism's role in expanding ministry influence.

Question 2 asked participants, “Do you believe that your compensation from your ministry is sufficient to prepare you for retirement?” Answers in pre-workshop surveys show a majority of participants expressed concerns about insufficient compensation from their ministry roles. Many noted that they rely on their secular jobs for financial security and retirement planning. The general sentiment was that ministry compensation alone was not adequate for long-term stability. While concerns about compensation remained in post-project surveys, some participants acknowledged alternative approaches to financial planning, such as diversifying income streams or adjusting expectations around traditional retirement structures. Still, most participants continued to view ministry compensation as inadequate for retirement planning. The fact that a core concern for pastors is ongoing insufficient ministry compensation highlights an ongoing need for financial education and resource development for bivocational pastors.

Question 3 asked, “Do you believe bivocationalism enhances or diminishes the effectiveness of a pastor’s ministry? In pre-project surveys, participants were divided on whether bivocationalism enhances or diminishes ministry effectiveness. Some argued that it allows pastors to be more relatable and grounded in everyday experiences, while others felt it divided their attention and reduced their capacity to lead effectively.
Following the workshop, more participants leaned toward seeing bivocationalism as enhancing ministry effectiveness. They cited time management skills, broader community engagement, and increased financial independence as benefits that could strengthen a pastor’s influence. However, a few still maintained that the dual responsibility posed significant challenges. Participants’ V pre-workshop questionnaire stated, “An effective ministry by my definition is one where the heart and will of God has

free rein. That may look different within various congregations but in the final analysis God is glorified and God's people are edified. A minister cannot be effective in completing God's assignment, if they are bought or bossed by those they lead. For this reason, I believe that a bivocational minister or being one who has retired from a position with sustainable income enhances the effectiveness of a pastor's ministry. Being solely reliant on a salary from a ministry can diminish a minister's effectiveness because it provides gaps for manipulation and abuse." Participant V's post-workshop questionnaire stated, "I believe that bivocationalism enhances the effectiveness of a pastor's ministry because it negates having to rely upon a salary from the congregation to support the minister's family. I also believe that it strengthens the minister's ability to be able to speak freely those things that have been received by Holy Spirit without the fear of financial repercussions if those in the congregation do not agree with what is being said." The workshop encouraged a more positive view of bivocationalism's potential benefits. While challenges remain, more participants saw its advantages in terms of outreach and leadership.

Question 4 asked, "When you assess the current landscape of the church (low church attendance), and the economic climate (drastic inflation), do you view bivocationlism as a remedy? Pre-project surveys indicated, many participants viewed bivocationalism as a necessary adaptation in light of declining church attendance and economic instability Some saw it as a means to sustain churches financially, while others worried it might be a symptom of deeper systemic issues. However, post-workshop responses reflected a more nuanced perspective. Rather than viewing bivocationalism solely as a reaction to financial struggles, some participants recognized its role in

modernizing ministry approaches. Concerns about sustainability, the stifling of spiritual growth, and the long-term impact of economic pressures remained. For example, Paticipant IX post-workshop questionnaire stated, "I do not necessarily see it as a remedy but more as a consequence. I think sometimes it can also become a crutch to the pulpit and the pew. I am a believer that God's design is for the church to increase and in attendance, spirit, and finances. Sometimes people out of presupposition and stereotype use bivocationalism as a means of keeping the pastor "in-check" because they view full-time pastoring as ecclesiastical extortion. While there are factors such as economic hardship and drastic inflation, I believe that the church and giving towards it financially should remain a priority for believers. Sometimes pastors also use bivocationalism as a means of avoiding challenging members to be more supportive and prioritizing giving even amidst economic hardship. I view giving to God as being just as important — if not MORE important — as any other bill that we would dare not neglect no matter that hardship." The workshop appeared to have broadened perspectives on how bivocationalism fits within larger economic and church attendance trends. While financial constraints are a concern, more participants saw bivocationalism as a proactive strategy rather than merely a survival mechanism.

Meanwhile, Question 5 asked, "If you are currently bivocational, do you view your vocational within the marketplace as a sect of your overall ministry?"
In pre-project surveys opinions were split on whether secular work should be considered a part of ministry. Some participants saw their market place jobs as an extension of their ministry, while others viewed their secular job as completely separate.

After the workshop, a greater number of participants acknowledged the potential for their secular roles to serve as ministry platforms. Some cited biblical examples of those who combined spiritual leadership with secular professions. There was an increased emphasis on integrating faith into everyday work rather than compartmentalizing it. The workshop reinforced the idea that ministry can extend beyond the church, encouraging participants to see their secular vocations as part of their spiritual calling.

Journaling

Journal entries also captured the impact that the bootcamp had on the participants. One journal entry from Participant IV states, "The presentation on bi-vocational pastors offered insightful guidance for those balancing ministry responsibilities alongside secular employment. It provided practical advice for navigating the unique challenges and opportunities of this dual role. A key takeaway for me were the "3 Bs" that serve as foundational principles for bi-vocational pastors: 1. Balance – Emphasizing the importance of maintaining equilibrium between ministry duties, secular work, and personal life. The speaker highlighted strategies for time management and prioritization to ensure that no area is neglected. 2. Boundaries – Addressing the need to establish clear boundaries to prevent burnout and maintain healthy relationships. Practical examples

included setting firm schedules and communicating limits with congregations and employers. 3. Burdens – Acknowledging the emotional, spiritual, and physical weight of bi-vocational ministry. The presenter offered encouragement and practical tools for managing stress, including leaning on a support network, consistent prayer, and self-care practices.

The presentation was rich in content, offering valuable insights and relatable anecdotes. However, one area for improvement would be the inclusion of a visual aid, such as a PowerPoint presentation. A visual component could enhance participant engagement, highlight key points more effectively and serve as a helpful reference tool for attendees after the session. Providing this supplementary resource would allow participants to revisit the material and implement the lessons shared in their ministry contexts. Overall, the presentation was an excellent resource for bi-vocational pastors, offering practical strategies and encouragement to thrive in their dual roles."

Participant XL, in his final journal entry wrote, "This was a much-needed discussion on how to navigate bivocationalism and pastoral leadership. I hope you can present your work in the future at conferences so that many others can benefit from this discussion. The "prestige of a fully funded ministry" should be further examined. Every assignment is relevant whether its full-time ministry or bivocational leadership.
God needs godly leaders in the marketplace/workplace. Mental health is essential for the bivocational pastor. Balance and boundaries are needed.

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted as my final mode of data collection. It was a great opportunity to speak with some participants in a personal setting and possibly allow them to be more transparent then they had previously been. I selected three individuals to perform these interviews with. The following questions were asked:

1. What is your honest opinion of the Bivocational Blueprint workshop?
2. Do you think the information shared would be advantageous to the future of your ministry?
3. Would you recommend this workshop to other pastor and ministry leaders?

Participant II interview went as follows:

Researcher: How are you today?

Participant II: Well

Researcher: Thank you for your participation. What is your honest opinion of the Bivocational Blueprint workshop?

Participant II: It was awesome. Lots of info. I really enjoyed the workshop. “You have you something here.”

Researcher: Thanks so much. Do you think the information shared would be advantageous to the future of your ministry?

Participant II: Yes sir! There was a lot of that I did not know. I needed this.

Researcher: Would you recommend this workshop to other pastor and ministry leaders?

Participant II: Doc, you have a masterpiece that needs to be heard across this nation. I am praying and committed to helping you reach those heights.

Conclusion

This dissertation sought to address bivocationalism, an often-underdiscussed yet increasingly critical reality in contemporary pastoral ministry. Through a qualitative exploration of lived pastoral experiences and the implementation of a structured, cohort-based bootcamp intervention, this study provides both theoretical insight and practical guidance for pastors navigating the financial, spiritual, and relational challenges of dual vocational ministry. The research demonstrates that bivocationalism is not merely a financial workaround or a fallback option, but a viable and, in many cases, necessary ministerial model that calls for thoughtful integration, theological clarity, and strategic planning.

At the heart of this study is the recognition that many pastors serve in economic and ecclesial environments that cannot support full-time salaries. In this context, bivocationalism becomes not simply a matter of choice but of survival. However, this dissertation advances the argument that such a survival mechanism can be reimagined as a strategic framework, one that not only enables financial sustainability but also enriches pastoral presence and widens ministerial reach. Far from signaling diminished commitment, bivocationalism can signify greater stewardship, self-awareness, and theological maturity.

The three-part bootcamp curriculum focused on identity, planning, and conflict and served as the central intervention of this project. Each session provided a structured environment for reflection, dialogue, and resource-sharing, equipping participants with both the practical tools and theological rationale to embrace bivocational ministry more holistically. The first session helped redefine the perception of bivocationalism among participants. Many entered the program viewing it as a reluctant compromise yet emerged seeing it as a proactive and spiritually aligned path. The use of biblical precedent, such as Paul's tentmaking ministry, helped participants ground their experience in scriptural legitimacy, freeing them from shame or stigma historically attached to working outside the church.

The second session, focused on financial planning and reinforced the long-term benefits of integrating marketplace income into comprehensive life planning. The absence of structured retirement provisions in many churches has left pastors vulnerable to long-term insecurity. The bootcamp directly addressed this issue, providing concrete tools for financial literacy, investment strategies, and resource management. Participants reported increased confidence in managing their finances and a greater sense of ownership over their economic futures. The data indicates that financial knowledge is a critical gap in ministerial preparation, and equipping pastors in this area is essential for long-term vocational sustainability.

The final session on congregational conflict surfaced the emotional and organizational tolls that often go unaddressed in pastoral life. It also revealed that bivocationalism, when implemented with intention, can buffer pastors from toxic dependency on church politics for personal financial survival. Conflict resolution

strategies, paired with open theological reflection, helped participants frame their leadership roles more clearly and establish healthier boundaries. In doing so, the bootcamp not only supported financial literacy and planning but also relational and emotional resilience.

Survey data and post-intervention feedback reflect a significant evolution in participants' understanding of bivocationalism. Before the bootcamp, most participants saw their secular work as a financial necessity disconnected from their ministry. Post-bootcamp reflections indicate a shift as more participants began to view their marketplace roles as an extension of their spiritual calling. This integration marks a critical epistemological development. It reframes secular employment not as a deviation from ministry, but as a mission field in its own right—one that can amplify pastoral presence and witness beyond traditional church walls. Moreover, participants began to articulate bivocationalism as a form of liberation rather than limitation. Free from the economic dependencies that can sometimes lead to congregational manipulation or burnout, pastors reported feeling more empowered to preach, lead, and serve with authenticity. The recurring theme of "balance, boundaries, and burdens" provided a conceptual framework through which pastors could organize their time, energy, and commitments, allowing for healthier vocational rhythms and personal sustainability.

However, this study also acknowledges the tensions and limitations of bivocationalism. It is not a universal solution, and it is not without cost. Several participants noted the difficulty of balancing dual responsibilities, the risk of burnout, and the potential for congregational misunderstanding or resistance. These concerns point to the need for continued pastoral support, denominational advocacy, and cultural shifts

within congregations that still equate full-time status with spiritual legitimacy. To that end, this project advocates for a broader institutional recognition of bivocational ministry. Seminaries, denominational bodies, and church leadership programs must incorporate bivocational training into their curricula not as an exception or afterthought but as a core component of pastoral formation. Similarly, churches must be encouraged to develop flexible models of leadership, financial planning, and member engagement that reflect the economic realities of their congregations and pastors alike.

One of the most important findings from the bootcamp and post-survey feedback is that pastoral effectiveness is not inherently diminished by bivocationalism. On the contrary, when structured properly, it can increase a pastor's empathy, expand their community footprint, and reduce their vulnerability to church-based conflict and financial stress. Participants who embraced the model described feeling more aligned with God's call, more confident in their decision-making, and more secure in their provision.

This study also suggests that the future of pastoral ministry in smaller churches, rural congregations, and economically stressed regions will likely depend on bivocational models. As such, pastoral identity must be redefined to reflect this emerging reality—not as a less-than status but as a fully valid, fully empowered expression of God's call. The theological imagination must stretch to accommodate this shift, embracing work as sacred whether it occurs in a pulpit, a classroom, a hospital, or a business office.

Considering this project, The Bivocational Blueprint, I strongly contend that this should not be an ended discussion but rather an ongoing conversation that shifts the mindset of ministry leaders. Enlightenment and enrichment will prepare the pastor for the inevitable swings in the church and economy. They have to know how to navigate these

circumstances. How will they know if they are not told? There must be a herald to the heralders.

Ideally, this conversation would begin in early academic settings so future practitioners would have this information in the initial stages of their theological academic journey. Then, it would be a shaping of mindsets as opposed to the reshaping of mindsets. Possibly a class or a portion of a class dedicated to bivocationalism, so that it is no longer viewed as an afterthought or contingency plan, but a norm. In this setting, the topic can be explored, the reality can be revealed, the data can be discussed, and decisions can be made. Having a discussion of the ebbs and flows of ministry and being equipped with the tools and the awareness of structuring a bivocational ministry would be an absolute change agent.

Not only should this be shared in academic settings, but also in professional development settings such as conferences, conventions, and workshops. This approach would make this information accessible to leaders that are currently serving who may not be enrolled in school. This would also help broaden the definition and understanding of bivocationlism and its essentiality to the profession as well as the professional. Such exposure would allow for proactive adjustments to be made in their respective ministries. Scripture says to, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that one may run that read it." The Bivocational Blueprint has been written. I plan to continue sharing this work through lectures, seminars, and future literary ventures so that Pastors may be bettered.

In sum, this dissertation presents bivocationalism not as a crisis response, but as a strategic, theological, and sustainable approach to ministry. By integrating financial literacy, vocational identity, and relational leadership, pastors can serve more faithfully and flourish more fully. The financial bootcamp demonstrates that transformation is possible when ministers are given space to reflect, tools to plan, and community to grow. In embracing the bivocational path, pastors are expanding their call instead of compromising their call.

APPENDIX A

WORKSHOP CONSENT FORM

Workshop Consent Form

The Bivocational Blueprint

This workshop aims to highlight the necessity and benefit of bivocationalism.

I confirm that my participation in this research project is voluntary.

I understand that I will not receive any payments for participating in this research interview.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any question or I can stop the interview at any time.

I understand that all the information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.

I have read and understood the explanation provided to me.

I have been given a copy of this consent form.

I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me.

By signing this form, I agree with the terms indicated above.

Participant's Signature

Date Signed

APPENDIX B

PRE-WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE

Pre-Workshop Questionnaire

QUESTION 1. How do you define bivocationalism?
QUESTION 2. Do you believe that your compensation from your ministry is sufficient to prepare you for retirement? Please explain
QUESTION 3. Do you believe bivocationalism enhances or diminishes the effectiveness of a pastor's ministry? Please explain
QUESTION 4. When you assess the current landscape of the church (low church attendance), and the economic climate(drastic inflation), do you view bivocationlism as a remedy ?
QUESTION 5. If you are currently bivocational, do you view your vocation within the marketplace as a sect of your overall ministry? Please explain
Name Date

APPENDIX C

POST-WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE

Post-Workshop Questionnaire

QUESTION 1. How do you define bivocationalism?
QUESTION 2. Do you believe that your compensation from your ministry is sufficient to prepare you for retirement? Please explain
QUESTION 3. Do you believe bivocationalism enhances or diminishes the effectiveness of a pastor's ministry? Please explain
QUESTION 4. When you assess the current landscape of the church (low church attendance), and the economic climate(drastic inflation), do you view bivocationlism as a remedy ?
QUESTION 5. If you are currently bivocational, do you view your vocation within the marketplace as a sect of your overall ministry? Please explain
Name Date

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Individual Interview Questions

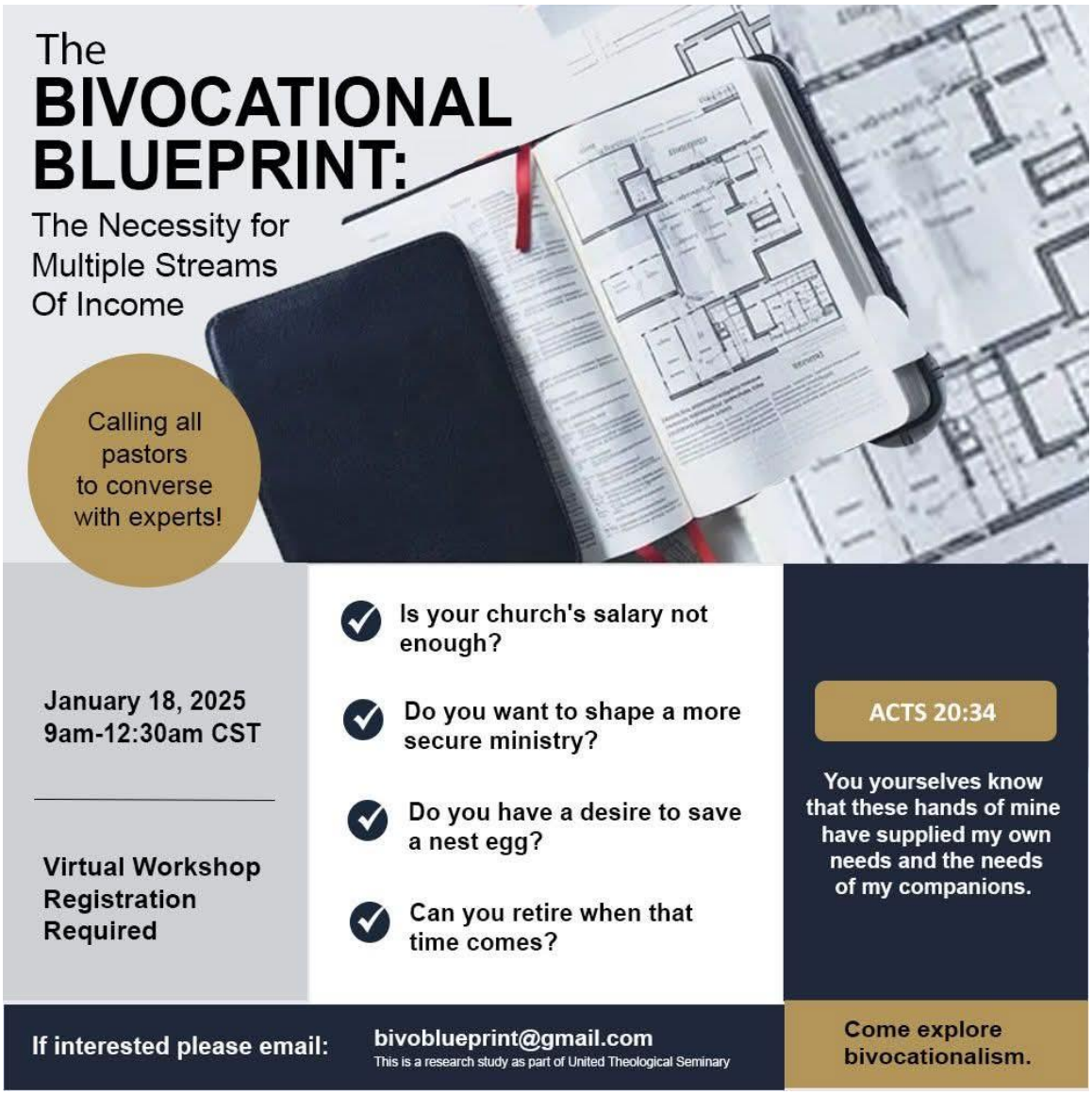
1. What is your honest opinion of the Bivocational Blueprint workshop?

2. Do you think the information shared would be advantageous to the future of your ministry?

3. Would you recommend this workshop to other pastor and ministry leaders?

APPENDIX E

WORKSHOP FLYER


The
BIVOCATIONAL
BLUEPRINT:
The Necessity for
Multiple Streams
Of Income
Calling all
pastors
to converse
with experts!
January 18, 2025
9am-12:30am CST
Virtual Workshop
Registration
Required
Is your church's salary not enough?
Do you want to shape a more secure ministry?
Do you have a desire to save a nest egg?
Can you retire when that time comes?
ACTS 20:34
You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.
If interested please email:
bivoblueprint@gmail.com
This is a research study as part of United Theological Seminary
Come explore
bivocationalism.

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